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21 LS MPs, 10 from RS in Waqf Bill JPC

12 members of the panel are from NDA, including 8 from BJP, and 9 from Opposition

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

The joint committee of Parliament to examine the Waqf (Amendment) Bill will have 31 members -- 21 from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha -- and will submit its report by the next session.

Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha on Friday adopted a motion moved by Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, who also holds the parliamentary affairs portfolio, naming the members to be part of the committee.

The Lok Sabha members in the panel are Jagdambika Pal, Nishikant Dubey, Tejasvi Surya, Aparajita Sarangi, Sanjay Jaiswal, Dilip Saikia, Abhiit Gangopadhyay, DK Aruna (all BJP); Gaurav Gogoi, Imran Masood and Mohammadd Jawed (all Congress); Mohibullah (Samajwadi Party); Kalyan Banerjee (Trinamool Congress); A Raja (DMK); Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu (Telugu Desam Party); Dileshwar Kamait (JDU); Arvind Sawant (Shiv Sena-UBT); Suresh Mhatre (NCP-Sharad Pawar); Naresh Mhaske (Shiv Sena); Arun Bharti (Lok Janshakti Party-Ram Vilas); and Asaduddin Owaisi (AIMIM).

Those included from the Rajya Sabha are Brij Lal, Medha Vishram Kulkarni, Gulam Ali, Radha Mohan Das Agrawal (all BJP); Syed Naseer Hussain (Congress); Mohammed Nadimul Haque (Trinamool Congress); V Vijayasai Reddy (YSRCP); M Mohamed Abdulla (DMK); Sanjay Singh (AAP); and nominated member Dharmasthala Veerendra Heggade.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla is expected to name the committee's chairperson soon. There is a view that BJP's Pal may head the panel but officials said a final call would be taken by Birla.

The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Thursday and referred to a joint committee of Parliament after a heated debate, with the government asserting the proposed law did not intend to interfere with the functioning of mosques and the opposition calling it targeting of Muslims and an attack on the Constitution. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Thursday and referred to a joint committee of Parliament ***PHOTO: PTI***

MP from K'taka nominated to JPC

Naseer Hussain, who is Rajya Sabha MP representing Karnataka, has been nominated to the Joint Parliamentary Committee to scrutinise Waqf (Amendment) Bill 2024. The Congress leader was been a member of Karnataka State Board of Waqf. *—PTI*

Oppn walks out after fiery Dhankhar vs Jaya face-off

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

Uneasy relations between Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar and Opposition parties on Friday erupted in a heated exchange between the chair and Samajwadi Party MP Jaya Bachchan, leading to a walkout by Opposition parties and Dhankhar calling it "disrespect to democracy and constitution".

The cine star objected to the "tone" in which Dhankhar addressed her as well as switching off the mike of Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge, triggering a heated exchange. The Chairman, who is also the Vice President of India, said he can't be "schooled" and that Bachchan "may be anybody... a celebrity" but she has to observe decorum.

Trouble broke when the Congress MPs sought an apology from BJP member Ghanshyam Tiwari for comments he had made on Kharge last week. Bachchan indicated that she too wanted to speak on the issue and Dhankhar called her by her full registered name, Jaya Amitabh Bachchan. "I am an actor. I understand body language and expression. Please forgive me but your tone is unacceptable. We are colleagues sir, you may be sitting on the chair," said Bachchan. *—PTI*

Opposition MPs after a walkout during Monsoon session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Friday ***PHOTO: PTI***

OPPN NOTICE SEEKS DHANKHAR'S REMOVAL AS VP

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

The turbulent relations between Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar and INDIA bloc parties came to a head on Friday with sources saying that the Opposition is considering submitting a notice for moving a resolution to remove the vice president from his office.

They said the timing of the notice is to be discussed and decided and though the resolution may not go through it would be a statement to highlight the Chair's "blatantly and consistently partisan" approach.

Opposition sources said 87 members have signed on the proposal to initiate action against Dhankhar.

The source said concerns of opposition parties include microphone of the Leader of Opposition being turned off repeatedly. The opposition wants the House to be run by rules and convention and personal remarks against members are unacceptable, the source said. *—PTI*

CAG flags financial loss of ₹2,604 cr to Railways

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has flagged financial losses to the Indian Railways to the tune of Rs 2604.40 crore in 33 case studies of non-recovery of loans and GST, improper decision to generate non-fare revenues, ineligible grant of concession, and unfruitful expenditures. In one of these 33 cases, the CAG said that the Ministry of Railways suffered a loss of Rs 834.72 crore in interest it was forced to pay to a third party on a loan of Rs 3,200 crore it had extended to IRCON. It recommended the fixing of the responsibility for this huge loss and avoid "decisions for generating Non-Fare Revenue at the fag end of the financial year without conducting proper feasibility studies." *—PTI*

Lanka Navy arrests 35 TN fishers, seizes 4 boats

RAMANATHAPURAM, 9 AUG

Around 35 fishermen from Pamban in Tamil Nadu's Ramanathapuram district were arrested by the Sri Lankan navy for allegedly poaching in Lankan waters. Four country boats that the Pamban fishermen had used to fish were impounded allegedly for violating the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) on Thursday, a senior fisheries department official said here on Friday. The fishermen were apprehended by the Lankan navy in the northwestern seas of Lanka, south of Mannar, when they were reportedly fishing in Lankan waters. *—PTI*

Amid tensions, Air India suspends all flights to Tel Aviv

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

Air India on Friday announced suspension of flights to and from Tel Aviv till further notice amid escalating tensions between Israel and Iran. Earlier it had suspended services from the national capital to Tel Aviv till 8 August. The carrier is offering a full refund to its passengers with confirmed bookings for travel to and from Tel Aviv. Tensions continue to remain high in the Middle East amid conflict between Israel and various terror groups, including Hamas. Earlier this year also, Air India had briefly suspended flights to Tel Aviv at different points of time due to the Middle East tensions. After nearly five months, the carrier had recommenced the services to the Israeli city on 3 March. *—PTI*

Sisodia gets bail; walks out of jail after 17 months

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

The Supreme Court on Friday granted bail to senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia, who has been in jail for 17 months, and sharply rebuked the courts below saying his long incarceration without trial had deprived him of the right to speedy justice.

Observing that "bail is rule and jail is exception", the top court said it is high time trial courts and high courts recognised this principle.

"As observed time and again, prolonged incarceration before being pronounced guilty of an offence should not be permitted to become punishment without trial," a bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan said, while describing Sisodia as a man with "deep roots in society".

The top court granted him bail in the separate corruption and money laundering cases linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam after spending in jail for 517 days.

Hours later, a Delhi court issued an order for Sisodia's release after accepting the bail bonds and surety bonds submitted by his advocates.

In its 38-page judgement, the apex court directed that Sisodia be released on bail on a personal bond of Rs 10 lakh with two sureties of the like amount.

The former deputy chief minister of Delhi was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on 26 February, 2023 over purported irregularities in the formulation and implementation of the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy 2021-22. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested him in the money laundering case stemming from the CBI FIR on 9 March, 2023. He resigned from the Delhi cabinet on 28 February last year. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

AAP leader Manish Sisodia waves to supporters after his release from Tihar jail in New Delhi, on Friday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Kerala seeks Rs 2K cr aid from Centre for Wayanad

WAYANAD, 9 AUG

A day ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled visit to landslide-hit Wayanad, the cabinet sub-committee of the Kerala government met with a Central team visiting the area and sought Rs 2,000 crore in assistance for rehabilitation and relief work in the disaster-stricken region.

The Central team, led by Rajeev Kumar, who is a joint secretary with the Ministry of Home Affairs, visited the disaster-hit region and interacted with the survivors.

The Central team and Kerala cabinet sub-committee discussed the various rescue operations, relief camps, autopsies, handing over of bodies to relatives of the deceased, funerals, the collection of DNA samples and the details of the missing people.

Meanwhile, the State government said those who are in relief camps will be rehabilitated to various houses, including government quarters identified for the purpose.

Minister PA Muhammad Riyas said there are 125 houses, including government residential quarters, and most of them are ready for people to move into. The State government also said that the survivors will be provided cash assistance. *—PTI*

'FREEDOM OF CHOICE'

Why exempt tilak, bindi: SC stays Mumbai hijab ban

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

Supreme Court on Friday stayed a Mumbai college's decision banning 'hijab, burqa, cap and naqab' on the campus and said girl students must have the freedom to choose what they wear.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar came down heavily on the Chembur Trombay Education Society, which runs the 'NG Acharya and DK Marathe College' for issuing such a circular and asked whether it would ban 'bindi' and 'tilak' also.

During the hearing, Justice Kumar asked senior advocate Madhavi Divan, appearing for the society, how was the college empowering the girl students by issuing such a circular. "How are you empowering the women by telling them what to wear? I think it's less said the better.

Justice Khanna said the larger issue of allowing hijab in educational institutions is pending consideration before a larger bench ***PHOTO: PTI***

Where is the freedom of choice for the women? Where is freedom of choice of what to wear to the girl students? Educational institutions should not force their decisions on the girl students on what to wear," said Justice Kumar. Divan contended that the college is a co-educational institution and the intention behind the directive is to ensure that the religious faiths of the students are not revealed. The lawyer said the circular was not limited to 'hijab, burqa or naqab' but extended to even ripped jeans and other such attire.

Justice Khanna asked "Will the students' names not reveal their religious identity? and added "Religion is in their names also. Do not impose such rules." Justice Khanna said the larger issue of allowing hijab in educational institutions is pending consideration before a larger bench. *—PTI*

GOVT FORMS PANEL TO MONITOR INDO, BANGLA BORDER

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

Narendra Modi government on Friday constituted a high-level committee, headed by a top Border Security Force (BSF) official, to monitor the situation along the Indo-Bangladesh border in wake of the ongoing state of affairs in the neighbouring country, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said.

Shah said the committee would be in touch with counterpart authorities in Bangladesh to ensure the safety and security of Indian nationals, Hindus and other minority communities living there.

Meanwhile, tension prevailed at the Sitalkuchi fenced land border area of Cooch Behar district in West Bengal on Friday morning after panicked Bangladeshi nationals, numbering nearly a thousand, assembled on the other side of the fence in their bid to cross over to India and seek refuge. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3, 5 & 6

NEERAJ-ARSHAD BOND

Like my son: 2 nations, 2 moms, 1 emotion

NEW DELHI/KARACHI, 9 AUG

"Gold jis ka hai, wo bhi hamara he larka hai. Yeh baat sirf aik maa he keh sakti hai. Amazing."

Shoaib Akhtar had just the right words to sum up the warm sentiments after mothers of champion javelin throwers Neeraj Chopra and Arshad Nadeem called each other's sons their own following a historic Olympic final in Paris.

The warmth they exuded was a refreshing change from the often vile discourse that accompanies any India-Pakistan sporting showdown, fuelled by the ever-outraged keyboard warriors on social media.

Nadeem beat the Indian defending champion in Paris. Chopra clinched a silver medal with a season's best throw of 89.45m after Nadeem pulled off an Olympic record-breaking effort of 92.97m on Thursday night.

Instead of bitterness, there were celebrations in both the countries and both Saroj Devi and Razhia Parveen deserve some credit for changing the discourse.

"We are very happy with the silver, the one who got gold is also our child and the one who got silver is also our child," Chopra's mother Saroj Devi told PTI Videos in Khandra, Panipat, where the family is based. "Nadeem is also good, he plays well, there is no difference between Neeraj and Nadeem. We got gold and silver there is no difference for us," Saroj Devi added in the interview given on Thursday night. Both Chopra and Nadeem are good friends off the field despite being arch-rivals on it. In Khanewal village of Pakistan's Punjab, Nadeem's mother Raziah Parveen echoed the sentiment shared by Saroj Devi.

Saroj Devi, Neeraj Chopra's mother ***PHOTO: PTI***

Raziah Parveen, Arshad Nadeem's mother ***PHOTO: X***

"They are not only friends but brothers and I also pray for Neeraj that he gets more success," she told a channel called 'Indy Urdu'.

"Neeraj is also like our son and I pray for him that he wins medals. Winning and losing is part of sport but they are like brothers," he added.

She isn't off the mark. Chopra stood up for Nadeem when he became the target of social media trolls after a short clip of him sifting through javelins during the Tokyo finals was portrayed as an attempt to tamper Chopra's equipment. The Indian also offered him support when Nadeem resorted to crowd-funding to finance a new javelin after the one he had was worn out following years of use. The two have repeatedly set the bar high in how sportsmen ought to conduct themselves and it was little surprise that the women displayed genuine affection for both the men. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 8

UAE amnesty to bring back Kannadigas

BENGALURU, 9 AUG

The UAE's upcoming amnesty programme for illegal residents is expected to trigger a wave of returns among Indian nationals, including a significant number of Kannadigas. The two-month amnesty, starting 1 September, will allow visa violators to regularise their status or leave the country without penalties. Arathi Krishna, Deputy Chairperson of NRI Forum Karnataka, told **Salar News** that she would get in touch with Indian Ambassador to the UAE and Consul General of India in Dubai to know the number of Kannadigas staying illegally in the UAE. With an estimated 3 lakh Kannadigas residing in the UAE, the amnesty may have a huge impact.—*Salar News*

Cops nab house maid for stealing 100g jewellery

BENGALURU, 9 AUG

An overenthusiastic housemaid, who flaunted stolen jewellery by uploading it as her WhatsApp display picture, was arrested by City police on Friday. The accused, Renuka, 38, from Hospet, had been employed in apartments across the City offering her services as a cook. City Police Commissioner B Dayananda said, "Renuka secured jobs in two apartments at Marathahalli's East Fountain Apartments. She managed to steal 100 grams of gold from both residences but acted as though she was unaware of the theft when confronted. The owners, suspicious of the missing gold, lodged a complaint with police." Whitefield police who had saved Renuka's number during their investigation, noticed her WhatsApp DP and realised that she was the thief. The authorities have recovered 80 grams of the stolen gold. —*Salar News*

18 students fall ill after eating hostel breakfast in Kolar

KOLAR, 9 AUG

Eighteen students of pre matric hostel in Ammanallur, Kolar fell ill after having breakfast at the hostel mess on Friday. The affected students were admitted to PHC Ammanallur and were later discharged after necessary medical assistance, said Channabasappa, Assistant Director of Social Welfare department. There are 54 inmates in the hostel run by the department and everyone had dosa and chutney for breakfast. However about 18 students complained of vomiting and nausea and soon the school authorities rushed to PHC. He said though the exact reason for the students getting ill could not be ascertained immediately, samples of food served have been sent to analysis. A team of senior officers of the department including Joint Director and other authorities visited the hostel. —*Salar News*

16 drug peddlers arrested with 4.5kg of ganja

BENGALURU, 9 AUG

The Central Crime Branch (CCB) of the Hubballi-Dharwad police arrested 16 individuals involved in drug-related activities and recovered lethal weapons along with narcotics on Friday. Speaking to **Salar News**, the Deputy Commissioner said, "The operation led to the seizure of Rs 9.7 lakh, 4.5kg of ganja, and two daggers. The raids were conducted in the Bendigeri area, and two policemen were injured during the operation. The injured officers are currently receiving treatment at KIMS, and their condition is reported to be improving." Acting on a tip-off, Old Hubballi Police officials also conducted a raid, seized ganja, 9 mobile phones worth Rs 2 lakh, three motorcycles worth Rs 1.50 lakh, and Rs 2,000 in cash. Out of 399 suspected drug consumers, 254 tested positive. 59 FIRs were registered. Hubballi-Dharwad Police Commissioner N Shashi Kumar said that out of 467 individuals, 251 tested positive for drug use in June. Consequently, 45 FIRs have been registered. —*Salar News*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Dy CM DK Shivakumar, AICC General Secretary and Karnataka incharge Randeep Singh Surjewala, Ministers HC Mahadevappa, MB Patil, KH Muniyappa, BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan, MLA NA Haris and others during Janandolana, in Mysuru on Friday. ***PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD***

Oppn has no moral right to seek my resignation: Siddaramaiah

Have to drive out communal, casteist people: CM at Janandolana

MYSURU, 9 AUG

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday slammed Opposition BJP-JD(S) for their 'Mysuru Chalo' march over an alleged land scam, saying none of their leaders have a moral right to question him and asked people to drive the "Manuvadis" out.

A day before the culmination of 'Mysuru Chalo' campaign, the march from Bengaluru to Mysuru demanding the Chief Minister's resignation alleging that his wife had benefited from an alternative site scam in Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA), Siddaramaiah hit out at the Opposition in a major showdown in his hometown.

The Opposition has alleged that Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi got alternative plots in the upmarket against the 'acquisition' of 3 acres and 16 guntas in a remote part of the city.

Speaking at 'Janandolana' convention at Maharaja's College Grounds here to counter the Opposition's allegations and their foot march, Siddaramaiah said, "9 August is the anniversary of the historic Quit India movement to drive out the British from India. Today we have to drive out communal, casteist and-feudal people. We have to oppose and condemn the Manuvadis, casteists and feudal lords who are unable to tolerate backward and exploited people. Hence, this event (Janandolana)."

He alleged former Congress chief ministers Devaraj Urs, S Bangarappa and M Veerapa Moily were forced to step down since they came from backward communities.

The show of strength by Congress in support of Siddaramaiah involved all the top guns from the party in Karnataka, including General Secretary (Karnataka) in-charge Randeep Singh Surjewala, State Congress President and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, ministers and MLAs rallying behind the CM.

Shivakumar said the Opposition was dreaming of removing the CM in Karnataka in 10 days, "but which is not possible for them in the next ten years". "Kumaraswamy claims himself to be 'Clean Swamy' but officials have told me that he has 50 cases of denotification of land against him. I will expose his corruption. Lokayukta has written to Governor regarding this. Hence Kumaraswamy has taken refuge in BJP," the DCM said.

Surjewala alleged that BJP and JD(S) want Congress to stop the five guarantee schemes, but his party will continue all the five guarantee schemes. Social Welfare Minister HC Mahadevappa asked BJP leaders to hold padayatra and seek funds from the Central and State's GST shares.

—*Salar News & PTI*

Truth in POCSO case will come out from court: Yediyurappa

MYSURU, 9 AUG

Responding to CM Siddaramaiah's statement asking him to retire from public life as he is an accused in a Pocso Act case, BJP leader BS Yediyurappa on Friday said the truth will come out when the court decides on the case, and the former will get a befitting reply. The former chief minister hit back at Siddaramaiah saying the time for him to retire and go home is approaching, pointing at MUDA site allotment 'scam'. —*Salar News*

'MYSURU CHALO' BY BJP-JD(S) ENTERS DAY 7

MANDYA, 9 AUG

The combined Opposition, Bharatiya Janata Party and Janata Dal(Secular) on Friday continued their protest march, demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over the alleged Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment 'scam.'

The seventh day of the 'Mysuru Chalo' protest march began at Srirangapatna in Mandya, and is scheduled to cover a distance of 10km. Congress is hosting a mega 'Janandolana' convention at Maharaja's College Grounds in Mysuru in support of Siddaramaiah and to counter the Opposition's foot march.

BJP and JD(S) are scheduled to conclude their protest march on Saturday by holding a mega rally on reaching Mysuru.

BJP State President and MLA BY Vijayendra, former deputy chief minister CN Ashwath Narayan, former BJP national general secretary and MLC CT Ravi, several legislators, leaders and workers from both parties took part, as the march resumed.

In the MUDA 'scam', it is alleged that compensatory sites were allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi in an upmarket area in Mysuru, which had higher property value as compared to the location of her land which had been "acquired" by the MUDA. The Congress government on 14 July constituted a single-member inquiry commission under former High Court Judge Justice PN Desai to probe the MUDA 'scam'.

Based on a petition filed by advocate-activist TJ Abraham, Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot had issued "show-cause notice" on 26 July directing the Chief Minister to submit his reply to the allegations against him within seven days as to why permission for prosecution should not be granted against him.

—*PTI*

RAINY RIDE

Heavy rain lashes Srirangapatna on Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway on Friday. Karnataka is expected to get light to heavy rainfall in the next five days, according to IMD ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

BBMP norms on PG facilities mandate cameras, cleanliness

BENGALURU, 9 AUG

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has introduced stringent guidelines for the operation of Paying Guest (PG) accommodations in the City. The new rules, which came into effect on Friday, aim to enhance safety, hygiene, and overall living conditions for PG residents.

Under the guidelines, PG owners must install CCTV cameras at all entry and exit points and maintain footage for 90 days. Each resident should have a minimum living space of 70 square feet, and the number of occupants must

PHOTO: PTI

align with the building's amenities. Cleanliness is paramount, with requirements for clean bathrooms, toilets, and safe drinking water. PGs with kitchens need to obtain an FSSAI license within three months.

Licences will only be granted based on the number of occupants allowed as per the available amenities in the building.

The guideline mandates that owners must ensure the availability of 135 liters per capita per day (LPCD) of water for each resident.

A 24-hour staff member is mandatory for all PGs, and fire safety certificates are essential before obtaining a business license. Emergency contact information and first aid kits should be readily available. The BBMP will conduct inspections every six months to ensure compliance and will take strict action against violators.

—*Salar News*

JD(S) LEADERS IN CUSTODY OVER FLEX REMOVAL DEMAND

MYSURU, 9 AUG

Mysuru City police took former minister SR Mahesh and former mayor MJ Ravikumar to preventive custody after they tried to protest demanding removal of a flex banner near Field Marshal Cariappa Circle here on Friday.

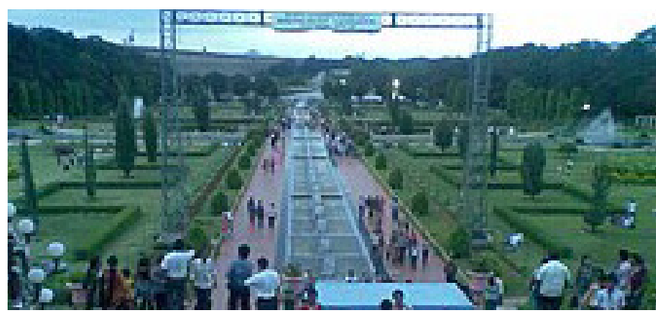
Along with the two JD(S) leaders, 10 others were detained and all of them were released later. Congress allegedly put up a flex banner on Thursday against JD(S) supremo HD Deve Gowda and Union minister HD Kumaraswamy accusing them of amassing wealth disproportionate to their income. The JD(S) activists protested, demanding its removal. —*Salar News*

GAJAPAYANA FOR DASARA ON 21 AUG

MYSURU, 9 AUG

Gajapayana, the march of elephants from jungle camps in Nagarahole National Park to Mysuru to take part in Dasara festival, is scheduled on 21 August, said Minister for Forest, Ecology and Environment Eshwar Khandre here on Friday.

The minister said a Dasara committee meeting headed by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will be held on 12 August at GKVK University of Agriculture Sciences, Bengaluru. The CM will release Gajapayana invitation cards on the day. —*Salar News*



Brindavan Gardens in Mysuru ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

₹2K cr allotted for Brindavan Gardens

BENGALURU, 9 AUG

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has announced Rs 2,000 crore for redeveloping Brindavan Gardens in Mysuru.

This announcement on Friday was made after he held discussions with local leaders and officials in Mandya, focusing on reviving Mysugar factory, redeveloping Brindavan Gardens and filling tanks.

After inspecting the land near KRS Dam for redeveloping Brindavan Gardens, Shivakumar outlined the project plan. The redevelopment, which includes Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary, will utilise the existing 200 acres while ensuring the safety of the dam. A planning authority will be formed, including representatives from 2-3 gram panchayats. The project will also involve widening roads, creating four-lane roads near entry and exit points and installing underground drainage systems to accommodate the large number of tourists visiting the gardens.

On reviving Mysugar factory, Shivakumar said discussions were held on whether to retain the existing factory in Mandya or establish a new one. The plan includes increasing the factory's sugarcane crushing capacity to 5,000 tonnes per day (TCD), with the technical team recommending all necessary facilities to support this ramping up.

Shivakumar said many farmers are shifting away from water-intensive crops like sugarcane. About 2,000 farmers have agreed to continue growing sugarcane, but the factory's sustainability will depend on the availability of sufficient supply.

Shivakumar said Karnataka was supposed to release 50 TMC of water to Tamil Nadu but had already released 96 TMC. He told officials to fill up tanks wherever possible and urged farmers to grow crops based on the advice of Agriculture and Horticulture departments. —*Salar News*

NAGA PANCHAMI

Devotees offer prayers on the occasion of Naga Panchami festival, in Bengaluru on Friday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

IN LINE WITH CENTRE

Driving licences, RCs to be smart cards

BENGALURU, 9 AUG

In a bid to modernise its services, the Karnataka Transport Department has announced plans to introduce smart cards for Driving Licences (DLs) and Registration Certificates (RCs). These new cards, equipped with QR codes and microchips, will replace the existing format.

The move is in line with the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways' guidelines for standardising DL and RC formats across the country. The department has invited tenders to select a new vendor for producing these advanced cards.

The new smart cards, equipped with QR codes and microchips, will replace the existing format. ***REPRESENTATIVE PHOTO***

The upcoming DLs and RCs will boast a plethora of features. The DL will display essential information such as the holder's name, date of birth, address, blood group, and organ donor status. A unique emergency contact number will be accessible through the QR code. The RC card, on the other hand, will detail the vehicle's registration number, date, expiry, chassis and engine numbers, manufacturer, model, and seating capacity.

Transport Commissioner Yogesh AM said the new system will enhance efficiency & security. —*Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

West Bengal bids farewell to Buddhadeb

KOLKATA, 9 AUG

Hundreds of people gathered to pay their final respects to former West Bengal chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya at the CPI(M)'s State headquarters here on Friday. The Marxist patriarch, died at the age of 80 at his residence here on Thursday. Mourners, some with teary eyes and others with clenched fists raised in a red salute, filed past to honour the man who had left an indelible mark on the State's political landscape. They recalled his efforts in improving education, healthcare, and industrial development, and how his vision had laid the groundwork for future progress. Meanwhile, his corneas were successfully transplanted into two persons, restoring their vision, a senior doctor said on Friday. *—PTI*

Cong MLAs to boycott session after walkout

IMPHAL, 9 AUG

MLAs of the Opposition Congress in Manipur walked out of the Assembly on Friday and decided to boycott the remainder of the session. Congress legislature party leader Okram Ibobi Singh alleged that MLAs of his party were not being allowed to raise pertinent issues in the House. "There has been no solution to the crisis in the state for more than 15 months. Earlier, we urged to shorten the nine sittings to three or four days and discuss thoroughly how to resolve the crisis as well as take a concrete resolution to approach to Centre, particularly the Prime Minister, for intervention," he said. "However, the government did not listen. Today, we moved five private member resolutions to seek an appointment with the Prime Minister," he added. *—PTI*

SC stays charges against Swami Prasad Maurya

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

The Supreme Court on Friday stayed criminal proceedings against former Uttar Pradesh minister Swami Prasad Maurya in connection with case of a marital dispute involving his daughter, former MP Sanghmitra Maurya. A bench of Justice MM Sundresh and Justice Aravind Kumar issued a notice to the UP government on an appeal filed against the decision of the Allahabad High Court. Maurya has moved the top court against an order of the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court which refused to quash criminal proceedings against him in a case filed by one Deepak Kumar Swarnkar, who claimed to be Sanghmitra's husband. *—PTI*

BJP panel meets PM over SCs, STs creamy layer

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

A delegation of BJP MPs on Friday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and expressed concern over the Supreme Court's observation on identifying the creamy layer among the Scheduled Castes (SC) and the Schedule Tribes (ST). After the meeting, Modi said on X, "Met a delegation of SC/ST MPs today. Reiterated our commitment and resolve for the welfare and empowerment of the SC/STs." On 1 August, Supreme Court judge Justice BR Gavai said states must evolve a policy for identifying the creamy layer even among SCs and STs, and deny them the benefit of reservation. BJP Rajya Sabha member Sikander Kumar, who was part of the delegation, said," All of us were concerned over the observation. We were getting calls from people expressing concern over the matter." *—PTI*

Parliament adjourned sine die, clocks 136% productivity

12 Govt Bills were introduced and four were passed in session

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

Both Houses of Parliament, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha were adjourned sine die on Friday, one sitting ahead of the scheduled end of the session.

The current session of Parliament was scheduled to end on 12 August but Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla adjourned the House sine die.

Productivity during the Session was 136 per cent. He informed that 12 Government Bills were introduced and four Bills were passed. Parliament commemorated the 82nd anniversary of the Quit India Movement.

Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak Bill passed

The new Bill would open new areas of air travel. The Aviation Ministry is looking at the design of seaplanes and helicopters.

Railways (Amendment) Bill introduced in LS

Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw introduced Bill. It aims to amend the Railways Act of 1989 to enhance the powers of the Railways Board and improve efficiency. It seeks to simplify the framework governing Indian Railways by repealing the Indian Railway Board Act, of 1905.

Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, introduced, seeks to raise nominees per a/c to 4

It provides for amending the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, Banking Regulation Act 1949, State Bank of India Act, 1955, Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act 1970, and Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1980. *—ANI*

The current session of Parliament was scheduled to end on 12 August but Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla adjourned the House sine die PHOTO: PTI

Dhankar junks notice on Phogat

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday rejected a notice by AITC member Mohammed Nadimul Haque seeking discussion on wrestler Vinesh Phogat's disqualification at the Paris Olympics. After papers were laid in the Upper House, Dhankhar said he had received a notice under Rule 267 from Haque on the issue. *—PTI*

Privilege notice against Pradhan

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh has submitted a notice to initiate privilege proceedings in the Rajya Sabha against Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan for "misleading" the House over the issue of alleged dropping of the Preamble to the Constitution from certain NCERT textbooks. *—PTI*

Awaiting return of 69 Indians from Russian army: EAM

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday said the government is awaiting the release of 69 Indians recruited into the Russian army and that in many cases there are indications that the Indian nationals were misled into joining that country's army.

The minister told Lok Sabha that CBI has registered a criminal case against 19 individuals and entities while evidence has surfaced against 10 human traffickers whose identities the government knows.

He was responding to queries from AIMIM member Asaduddin Owaisi on action being taken against individuals who are misleading youth to join the Russian army and whether India will stop buying discounted oil from Russia if it does not act on releasing Indians recruited into that country's army.

The Congress on Friday said it is a "national tragedy" that Indians recruited into the Russian army are waiting to be released from the force and alleged that the Centre's failure to create employment has led "our youth to risk their very lives for another country in a war that is not our own" *—PTI*

RELIEF TO AAP

AAP leader Manish Sisodia greets supporters after being released from the Tihar Jail following his bail in New Delhi, on Friday PHOTO: ANI

Sisodia's bail is a tight slap on BJP's dictatorship: AAP

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Friday said the Supreme Court order granting bail to party leader Manish Sisodia is a "tight slap" on the dictatorship of the BJP-led Centre but rued that the relief came after a year's delay.

In a boost to the embattled party that is grappling with the incarceration of its senior leaders, the Supreme Court granted bail to Sisodia in corruption and money laundering cases linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam, noting that he has been in custody for 17 months.

A bench of justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan said Sisodia has been in custody for 17 months and trial has not yet commenced, depriving him of the right to speedy trial.

Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh accused BJP of indulging in a politics of "hatred" and "ill will", saying AAP leaders were jailed because of a "political grudge".

The verdict is a "tight slap" on the dictatorship of BJP-led Central government, said Singh who was also jailed in connection to the alleged liquor scam.

At an event in Dwarka, Delhi Education Minister Atishi said, "They kept him in jail for 17 months on false charges, and today, he has been granted bail. Today, is the day that the man behind the education revolution of Delhi has been granted bail," she said.

AAP Delhi state convener Gopal Rai, said the prayers of the people has finally been fulfilled. *—PTI*

DESPITE WIN

SC junks plea against election of Amritpal to LS

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a plea against the election of jailed radical Sikh preacher Amritpal Singh as an MP from Punjab's Khadoor Sahib.

The petitioner claimed before a bench of Justices BR Gavai and K Viswanathan that Article 84 of the Constitution deals with qualification for membership of Parliament and says that a person shall not be qualified to be chosen to fill a seat in Parliament unless he is a citizen of India.

"In this case, respondent number four (Singh) had said that he does not owe allegiance to the Constitution of India," the petitioner, who appeared in-person, said.

"You file an election petition," the bench said.

The petitioner said he was not a voter of Khadoor Sahib constituency but was "deeply hurt" by the statements given earlier by Singh.

"It is a matter of evidence. There are procedures prescribed. There are provisions in the Representation of the People Act," the bench observed.

"Thank you. Dismissed," the bench said while refusing to entertain the petition.

On 5 July, Singh, was granted parole to take oath as members of the Lok Sabha.

Singh, who heads the 'Waris Punjab De' outfit, is lodged in a prison in Assam's Dibrugarh district for alleged offences under the National Security Act.

Singh, 31, won the Lok Sabha elections from Khadoor Sahib as an independent candidate while being incarcerated. *—PTI*

Amritpal Singh PHOTO: PTI

BANNING ONION EXPORT MISTAKE: AJIT

NASHIK, 9 AUG

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Friday said the Centre's move to ban onion export late last year was a mistake and the decision had cost the ruling 'Mahayuti' alliance dearly in the Lok Sabha polls in the state, a major producer of the bulbous crop.

Seeking to woo female voters ahead of the assembly polls, Pawar, during his ongoing mass outreach programme, announced that the first instalment under the government's flagship scheme for women, Mukhya Mantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana, will be released on 17 August. *—PTI*

Refuge to Hasina might not be favourable to India: BNP leaders

KOLKATA, 9 AUG

Indo-Bangla bilateral ties are not dependent on the Awami League and it is "natural to evoke adverse reactions" in Bangladesh over India giving refuge to former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Senior leaders of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) said on Friday.

Asserting that India was "very important" to Bangladesh, Senior BNP leader Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain told PTI over the phone from Dhaka that "it is high time to start a new chapter in bilateral relations."

Hossain also welcomed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's congratulatory message to the interim government in Bangladesh and hoped that the Indian government would no longer continue to support the Awami League and Sheikh Hasina, who was forced to flee the country following a mass uprising.

Echoing similar sentiments, BNP Vice-Chairman Abdul Awal Mintoo said it would have been better had Hasina not fled to India.

"It would have been better had she not fled to India, as we are yearning to have good relations with India. Bangladesh and its people believe and see India as a friend," Mintoo told PTI.

He noted, however, that India is well within its rights, as per international law, to give refuge to someone they choose.

When asked if the BNP wants Hasina to be handed over to Bangladesh, he replied, "It is for the interim government to decide; as BNP, we have not taken a call on it." *—PTI*

Army personnel stand guard in front of Jatrabari Police Station, that was vandalised and set on fire, in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Friday PHOTO: PTI

Rajiv Kumar PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Won't let any forces disrupt polls in J&K: CEC

JAMMU, 9 AUG

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar on Friday said no internal or external forces would be allowed to disrupt the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir which will be held "at the earliest".

Talking to reporters at the end of the two-day visit of an Election Commission delegation to the Union Territory, Kumar emphasised that all political parties in the region have sought for the assembly elections to take place soon.

This was the first major exercise for preparing the grounds for holding the maiden assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir after it was downgraded to a Union Territory on 5 August, 2019, following the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution.

The visit of the EC team led by Kumar comes ahead of the 30 September deadline given by the Supreme Court earlier this year for the completion of assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir. "We are committed to conducting elections at the earliest in Jammu and Kashmir. We are confident that the people will respond robustly to any disruptive forces and increase their participation when elections are held," Kumar said. *—PTI*

Raut bats for declaring MVA's CM face

MUMBAI, 9 AUG

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut on Friday emphasised on the need for the Opposition bloc Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) to project a chief ministerial face in Maharashtra ahead of the Assembly polls, remarks coming after party president Uddhav Thackeray meets with top Congress leaders.

So far, the MVA has refrained from collectively pitching for a chief minister face in the State where polls are due in October.

Asked if he was pushing for Thackeray's candidature for the top post, Raut avoided a direct reply and maintained that his party president and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi have been at the forefront of raising their voice against policies of the BJP-led government at the Centre.

- Thackeray was in New Delhi earlier this week where he met Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal

The MVA consists of the Shiv Sena (UBT), the Congress and the NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar).

Raut's remarks come amid Thackeray dropping hints that he was ready to be projected as the chief minister pick in the Maharashtra Assembly elections.

Thackeray was in New Delhi earlier this week where he met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, former party chief Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, AICC general secretary KC Venugopal and other INDIA bloc representatives. *—PTI*

TAMIZH PUDHALVAN SCHEME

Stalin launches Rs 1K monthly aid for boys

COIMBATORE, 9 AUG

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday launched the 'Tamizh Pudhalvan' (Tamil son) scheme of Rs 1,000 per month assistance to help boys from government and State-aided schools pursue higher education.

Launching the scheme here at the Government Arts College, Stalin said the 'Dravidian model' government is committed to social justice and outlined a slew of welfare schemes formulated accordingly.

The fare-free travel in buses (Vidiyal payanam--Travel towards dawn) for women plan, which helps women achieve financial independence, has been used by them 518 crore times. Under the Kalaignar Magalir Urimai Thittam (Kalaignar Scheme for Women's Right), about 1.15 crore women are being provided Rs 1,000 every month.

Also, boys who studied in Tamil medium from class 6 to 12 in government-aided schools are also eligible. Besides three, four and five year courses, aspirants who pursue industrial training courses after completing class 8 and 10 are also eligible. Arts, science, law, engineering and medicine are among the courses included under the scheme.

The Rs 1,000 assistance will be directly credited to the bank accounts of student-beneficiaries. A budgetary allocation of Rs 360 crore has been made for this year and 3.28 lakh students are set to benefit from the Tamizh Pudhalvan scheme.

"On Thursday night, I ordered crediting Rs 1,000 for this month to your bank accounts, did you receive a message of credit, have you got it? he asked.

Stalin said 'thank you' when students displayed messages of credit in their phones and expressed their happiness.

He distributed debit cards to students, marking the launch of the scheme. *—PTI*

The Rs 1,000 assistance will be directly credited to the bank accounts of student-beneficiaries PHOTO: X/@MKSTALIN

India to open Consulate in Auckland, says Murmu

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

India will soon open a Consulate in Auckland to further strengthen diplomatic ties with New Zealand and facilitate the diaspora, President Droupadi Murmu said on Friday.

Addressing the Indian Community Reception in Auckland, Murmu she was happy to see the achievements of the diaspora in New Zealand.

"India's ties with New Zealand are deep and multidimensional," she said on her first visit to the country.

"I am happy to announce that India will soon open a consulate in Auckland to fulfil the long-standing demand of the community," Murmu said, amid applause from the audience.

She expressed hope that the move will help in further boosting diplomatic ties.

Currently, there is an Honorary Consul of India in Auckland. The Indian High Commission in New Zealand is in Wellington.

Indian-origin people constitute six per cent of New Zealand's population, she said.

With their hard work and sacrifice, the diaspora has contributed to the development and economy of the country, she said. *—PTI*

Droupadi Murmu PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Himachal tragedy: Toll touches 27 after 5 bodies found

SHIMLA, 9 AUG

An auditorium built more thThe death toll in the flash floods triggered by cloudbursts in three districts of Himachal Pradesh on 31 July midnight rose to 27 with recovery of five bodies on Friday, officials said. As the search operation to trace about 30 missing people entered the ninth day, the families of the victims have lost hopes of seeing their loved ones alive. The tragedy occurred in Kullu's Nirmand, Sainj and Malana, Mandi's Padhar and Shimla's Rampur subdivision. The worst hit was Samej village on the border of Shimla and Kullu district where about 20 people are still missing. Four bodies were found in Dogri area near Sunni Dam in Shimla district while one was found near Nogli..*—PTI*

IAF called in after bomb shells found at scrap shop in MP

BETUL, 9 AUG

A bomb disposal squad and an Indian Air Force team were called in after 12-15 bomb shells, some of which are suspected to be live, were found in a scrap dealer's shop in Betul in Madhya Pradesh on Friday, a police official said. The discovery of these shells, which look like miniature rockets with 'practice' written on them, were found during routine searches conducted by police ahead of Independence Day, the official added. Scrap dealer Naeem Qureshi said the shells were in two sacks which two persons identified as Wasim and Shahrukh from Indira Gandhi ward in the city sold to him claiming they contained iron pieces. "I took the consignment on face value since I have bought items from the duo earlier. I didn't know these sacks contained bomb shells," Qureshi added. *—PTI*

Goods train derails in mountainous region of South Goa

PANAJI, 9 AUG

A goods train derailed in a mountainous region of South Goa bordering Karnataka on Friday morning, affecting the movement of trains on the South Western Railway (SWR) route, officials said. The train with 17 loaded wagons derailed in the ghat section between Sonalium and Dudhsagar stations under the Hubballi division at 9.35 am, SWR's chief public relation officer Manjunath Kanamadi said. As a result of the derailment, three trains were diverted and two others were cancelled, he said in a release. Accident relief trains with 140-ton cranes and other required materials have been dispatched to the site and restoration work was underway, he said. Due to the derailment, train number 17420/17022 Vasco Da Gama-Tirupati/Hyderabad weekly express, has been diverted to run via Madgaon, Karwar, Padil, Subrahmanya Road, Hassan, Arsikere, Chikjajur, Rayadurga and Ballari and further on its regular path.*—PTI*

Can't jeopardise career: SC refuses to postpone NEET-PG

SC says it can't postpone exam 2 days before its being held

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to postpone the NEET-PG examination scheduled for 11 August, saying it can't put the careers of two lakh candidates in jeopardy for five students who have filed the petition.

The top court dismissed a plea seeking deferment of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Postgraduate) (NEET-PG) which claimed that candidates have been allocated cities that are highly inconvenient for them to reach.

The Supreme Court said it could not order the postponement of the exam just two days before it was supposed to be held.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said judges are not academic experts.

A bench comprising CJI DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said judges are not academic experts *PHOTO: PTI*

"How can we postpone such an exam. Mr Sanjay Hegde, nowadays people just come asking to postpone the exam. It's not a perfect world. We are not academic experts.

"As a matter of principle, we will not reschedule the exam. There are two lakh students and four lakh parents who will weep over the weekend if we postpone it. Let there be certainty for medical students. We do not know who is behind these petitions," the bench said.

Senior advocate Sanjay Hegde, appearing for the petitioners, submitted that rescheduling NEET-PG is needed because one set of aspirants will take the exam in the morning and another in the afternoon because of the paucity of examination centres. He urged the bench to issue directions to conduct the exam in a single batch to ensure a uniform and fair testing environment for all candidates.

—PTI

CINEMA MEETS JUDICIARY

Bollywood actor Aamir Khan visits the Supreme Court on Friday ahead of the screening of the film 'Laapataa Ladies' for judges and was welcomed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud. The CJI jokingly said that he does not want a stampede in the court and welcomed Aamir Khan. The film is a heartwarming and empowering take on two brides in rural India who accidently get swapped during a train journey *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

SC extends stay till November on survey of Shahi Idgah

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

The Supreme Court on Friday extended its stay till November on the operation of the Allahabad High Court order that allowed a court-monitored survey of the Shahi Idgah mosque complex adjoining the Krishna Janmabhoomi temple in Mathura.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar ordered continuation of the stay the Apex Court had imposed on 16 January on the operation of the 14 December, 2023 order of the High Court.

During the hearing, advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain, appearing for the Hindu parties, said the appeal of the Committee of Management Trust Shahi Masjid Idgah filed against the 14 December last year order of the High Court and connected orders in the matter has become infructuous. Jain referred to the 1 August order of the High Court by which it rejected a plea of the Muslim parties challenging the maintainability of 18 cases related to the Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute in Mathura, and ruled that the religious character of the mosque needs to be determined.

The High Court had allowed a court-monitored survey of the Shahi Idgah mosque complex and agreed to the appointment of court commissioner to oversee it. The Hindu side had requested the High Court to conduct the original trial like it had done in the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi title dispute. *—PTI*

Govt clarifies on docus needed for CAA

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

The Centre has expanded the ambit of the rules issued under the citizenship law CAA through which Indian nationality will be given to persecuted minorities coming from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan.

The Union home ministry announced that "any document" issued by the Central or state governments or quasi-judicial body in India proving that either of the parents, grandparents or great-grandparents is or had been a citizen of one of the three countries will be acceptable.

The clarification of the home ministry came after many applicants seeking Indian nationality under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 were reported to be facing difficulties due to a particular clause of the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2024.

PHOTO: PTI

The CAA was enacted in December 2019 for granting Indian nationality to persecuted Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, Parsi and Christian migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan who came to India on or before December 31, 2014.

After the enactment, the CAA got the president's assent but the rules under which Indian citizenship would be granted were issued only on March 11 this year, after over a delay of four years. Since May, the government has been granting citizenship to those coming from the three countries under the CAA. *—PTI*

YASIN MALIK TO ARGUE NIA'S DEATH PLEA IN-PERSON

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

Turning down the court's suggestion to appoint a lawyer on his behalf, separatist leader Yasin Malik on Friday told the Delhi High Court he wished to argue in-person against a National Investigation Agency plea seeking death penalty for him in a terror funding case.

The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front chief (JKLF) was virtually present for the court proceedings from Tihar jail where he is serving a life term in the case.

A bench headed by Justice Suresh Kumar Kait listed the matter for hearing on 19 September and said Malik "may think again" about having legal representation in the case. The court also gave him time to think about either filing a reply or a written submission.

Malik also objected to being produced through virtual mode, saying he was physically produced in the trial court and there was never any law and order problem.

—PTI

LANDSLIDE-HIT AREA

Mysterious noise sparks fears of quake in Wayanad

CM BRUSHES OFF CONCERNS OVER MULLAPERIYAR DAM

PHOTO: PTI

WAYANAD, 9 AUG

People in various places in Kerala's landslide-ravaged Wayanad reported hearing a booming sound and reverberation from the underground on Friday morning, creating panic among residents and authorities.

The Wayanad district authorities said people from residential areas in the affected places were being shifted to safer locations.

They said that the booming sound and reverberation were "felt" in certain areas of Ambalavayal village and Vythiri Taluk.

The Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) said it is examining seismic records and conducting local reconnaissance to determine if anything is anomalous.

"As of now, seismic records do not show any indications of movements," it said. The sound was heard at around 10.15 am, according to a panchayat ward member who spoke to a TV news channel. *—PTI*

T'PURAM, 9 AUG

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has said that at the moment, there is no need for any concerns regarding the safety of the over-125-year-old Mullaperiyar dam located in the high-range district of Idukki.

Vijayan also said the stand taken by the state government so far on the issue will continue.

He was responding to reporters' queries on Thursday regarding Congress MP Dean Kuriakose reportedly raising safety concerns over the dam in the Lok Sabha.

In the Lok Sabha, Kuriakose had reportedly referred to the dam as a "water bomb" and demanded that it be decommissioned.

—PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Emotions run high as survivors join search team for the 1st time

Mohanan's face turned pale as he disembarked at Chooralmala. He is a part of a group of survivors confronting the devastation of their landslide-ravaged hamlet in Kerala's Wayanad district. Mohanan and the other survivors were visiting their birthplace for the first time since the devastating landslide that razed everything in the Mundakkkai area and left them homeless and grappling with the fact that they may never again see some loved ones who went missing. Mohanan and the other survivors joined the rescue teams on Friday for a joint search operation. They demanded this from the government authorities, telling them that they wanted the searches to be conducted in places they knew well.

Hoarding collapse: HC refuses relief to ad firm head

MUMBAI, 9 AUG

Bombay High Court on Friday dismissed a plea filed by advertising firm director Bhavesh Bhinde, arrested in the Ghatkopar hoarding collapse case, in which he had claimed the incident was an "act of God" and his arrest was illegal.

A division bench of Justices Bharati Dangre and Manjusha Deshpande said it has not found any legal infirmity and no impairment in the procedure mandated while arresting a person.

The bench said the procedural safeguards, which are indefeasible and receive recognition through the constitution, which have considered liberty of the citizen to be of paramount importance, is not impaired in any manner.

Bhinde had sought to quash the FIR against him, claiming that the incident, which occurred on 13 May, was an "act of God" and that he should not be held responsible.

PHOTO: PTI

He is charged with culpable homicide not amounting to murder and is currently in judicial custody. He had sought release on interim bail pending the hearing of his plea.

Bhinde is the director of Ego Media Private Limited which erected the giant hoarding in the city's Ghatkopar area that collapsed on 13 May killing 17 people and injuring over 70.

—PTI

SECURITY RUSHED IN AS GUNFIGHT BREAKS OUT IN MANIPUR

IMPHAL, 9 AUG

Gunfight broke out between armed militant groups in Manipur's Tengnoupal district on Friday, Chief Minister N Biren Singh said.

Security forces have been rushed to the area to contain the situation, he told the assembly.

Both the militant groups belonged to the same community, he added.

Singh said that on Thursday armed men fired on a team of labourers when they went to assemble a pre-fabricated house for the deployment of CRPF near Torbung in the Bishnupur district.

Security forces also retaliated and firing continued for 30 minutes, but no casualties were reported, he said.

The situation is at present normal, he said. *—PTI*

UP dad strangulates pregnant daughter over 'love affair'

BAREILLY, 9 AUG

A man strangled his pregnant 17-year-old daughter over her love affair and later turned up at a police station here to confess his crime, police said. According to Bareilly Superintendent of Police (City) Rahul Bhati, the teenager was in a relationship with Bhujendra alias Bhura Srivastava, a resident of Rasula village here. The minor's father, after learning about his daughter's pregnancy, filed a case of rape against Bhujendra. Charges under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act was also slapped against him at CB Ganj Police Station on Wednesday. Police arrested Bhujendra on Thursday and sent him to jail. After recording the girl's statement, she was sent back to her home. Kumar strangled his daughter later that night, said Bhati. The accused first confessed his crime at Parsa Kheda Police Station and he was later taken to CB Ganj Police Station, the SP added. *—PTI*

FIR against Khedkar's dad for obstructing govt work

PUNE, 9 AUG

Police have registered a case against Dilip Khedkar, the father of former probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar, on charges of threatening and obstructing a public servant in the discharge of duty in Pune district, officials said on Friday.

The case was filed at the Bundgarden police station here on the basis of a complaint lodged by a tehsildar-rank officer from the Pune district collectorate, they said.

"The complaint says that during Puja Khedkar's posting as an assistant collector, Dilip Khedkar allegedly used threatening language against tehsildar Dipak Akade, asking him to allot a cabin for his daughter even as he had no right to interfere in the administrative functioning," an official said.

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) recently cancelled the selection of Puja Khedkar and also permanently debarred her from all future exams and selections. She is currently untraceable after an FIR was registered against her in Delhi as she is accused of 'misrepresenting information' in her application for the UPSC Civil Services Examination, 2022.

Dilip Khedkar *PHOTO: PTI*

The 2023 batch officer is accused of misusing power and privileges by demanding perks and facilities she was not entitled for, during her training at the Pune district collectorate.

Dilip, a retired government official was also booked in a case of criminal intimidation filed by the Paud police in Pune, in which his wife Manorama was accused of toting a gun at a person in Mulshi area over a land dispute.*—PTI*

FROM 15 AUGUST

Haryana schools to replace 'Good Morning' with 'Jai Hind'

CHANDIGARH, 9 AUG

'Good morning' is set to be replaced by 'Jai Hind' in all Haryana schools from this Independence Day onwards, according to a government circular.

The move, initiated by the Haryana government, aims to "instill a deep sense of patriotism and national pride" among students, the directorate of school education, said in the circular issued on Thursday.

'Jai Hind' was coined by Subhas Chandra Bose during India's freedom struggle and was adopted as a salute by the armed forces after Independence, the circular said.

The directorate of school education sent the circular to all district education officers, district elementary education officers, district block education officers, block elementary education officers, principals and headmasters.

'Jai Hind' was coined by Subhas Chandra Bose during India's freedom struggle *PHOTO: PTI*

The patriotic greeting 'Jai Hind' will encourage students to appreciate sacrifices made for the country's freedom, it said.

'Jai Hind' transcends regional, linguistic and cultural differences and promotes unity among students from diverse backgrounds, it said.

Regular use of greetings like 'Jai Hind' will inculcate a sense of discipline and uniformity among students, the circular said. 'Jai Hind' has been implemented as a greeting by the armed forces, paramilitary forces and police forces whose services are recognised as disciplined, it added.

Incorporating traditional greetings into daily routine promotes cultural heritage and respect for national traditions, the circular said. *—PTI*

UP SERIAL KILLER NABBED, ADMITS TO KILLING SIX WOMEN

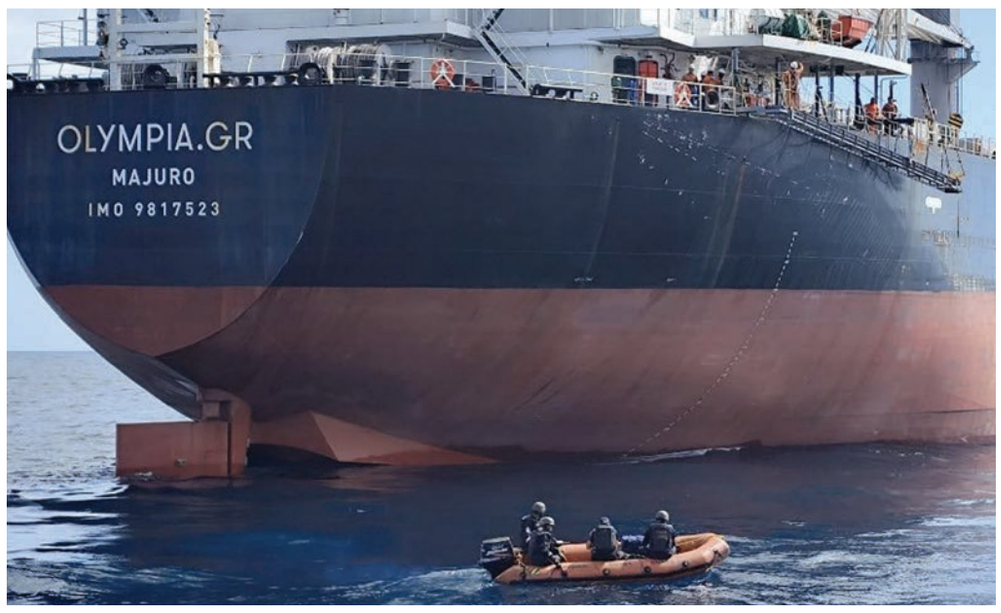
BAREILLY, 9 AUG

Police in Bareilly have arrested a suspected killer involved in a series of murders targeting middle-aged women in the district during the past year, officials said on Friday. Kuldeep Kumar has confessed to killing six women, according to the police.

Kumar was apprehended with the help of sketches and CCTV camera footage, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Anurag Arya said.

Incidents of strangulation of six middle-aged women in forest at isolated/deserted places, mainly in the Shahi and Sheeshgarh areas, had come to light in 2023 and 2024. Murder cases were registered in connection with these incidents at Shahi and Sheeshgarh police stations, he told reporters.

On Thursday, Kuldeep, aged about 35 years, was arrested by a team from Shahi police station from near the banks of the Mathiya with the help of a tip and previously prepared sketches and videos, the SSP said. *—PTI*



ICG AT RESCUE

In a swift action, the Indian Coast Guard Ship C-428 ANC evacuated a 39 year old Filipino crew from MV Olympia GR, off PortBlair. The vessel was enroute from Haldia to Indonesia. The patient's left hand thumb was severely crushed while working in engine room. ICG Ship brought the patient to PortBlair and shifted to GB Pant hospital

PHOTO: PTI

Indian exports, small biz hit by B'desh unrest

More than 300 people have lost their lives in the weeks-long mayhem that has also seen massive destruction of property

PHOTO: PTI

Last year, Aditya Manaksia started exporting food products to Bangladesh in an attempt to expand his business.

Now, the 43-year-old Kolkata-based exporter of agro products is nervously watching the continuing political turmoil in the neighbouring country that broke out in July as a protest against job quotas and has since led to the overthrow of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5.

More than 300 people have lost their lives in the weeks-long mayhem that has also seen massive destruction of property.

Manaksia exported spices, coconuts and pasta worth $10,000 to Bangladesh in the financial year ending March 2024 with the hope of making good money. "I was looking to expand my business there. But all my hopes are dashed due to the political unrest. I don't know what lies ahead. We can just pray for the situation to turn normal as soon as possible," Manaksia told Al Jazeera. Rajeev Goenka, a Kolkata-based entrepreneur who has an apparel manufacturing unit in Dhaka says that the current situation has hit him hard. Goenka's Dhaka unit makes around three million garments a year, including jeans and shirts, but the production has come to a halt since July due to the protests.

He is trying to assure his European clients that they will meet deadlines, he said, but he is not certain he will be able to. "We even don't know whether Bangladesh banks will offer Letter of Credit (LC) or not [needed for cross-border trade]. We have to wait and watch the situation and it is too early to comment on the total losses incurred because of the violence," Goenka said.

Strong trade relations

India has strong trade relations with Bangladesh, which is among its top 10 export destinations. In the last financial year, it sold goods including textiles, tea, coffee, auto parts, electricity, agriculture, iron, steel and plastics worth $11.1bn and imported ready-made garments, leather and leather products, among other items, for $1.8bn.

India's exports were down in the last couple of years partly because of an Indian ban on exporting basmati rice in an effort to save it for domestic consumption and also because of Dhaka's severe forex shortage which crimped its import capability, said Ajay Srivastava, Founder, Global Trade Research Initiative.

Srivastava, however, expressed hope that trade would turn normal soon. One industry that is not worried about the recent turmoil in Bangladesh is the cotton traders. Bangladesh is hugely dependent on India for raw cotton to supply its $47bn (exports) garment industry and Indian traders have said they expect to meet their export targets.

Ajay Sahai, director general of the Federation of Indian Exports Organisations, told Al Jazeera that things are returning to normal across the border. "The movement of trucks has resumed in some of the border areas and the situation is expected to turn normal soon. They [Bangladesh] are hugely dependent on us for daily food items and will start the imports soon as bringing the similar products from elsewhere will cost them dearly," he pointed out.

However, despite such assurances of normalcy, Kaustav Palit, 55, who exports onions, ginger, tamarind and other perishable items to Bangladesh told Al Jazeera that the situation is tricky.

"We deal in perishable goods that have a limited shelf life. We might incur losses if our vehicles get stranded at the international border. I normally send around $100,000 of goods every year to Bangladesh. We need a complete safe passage otherwise the losses would be huge … We are extremely worried about the situation," he explained.

Completely vacant now

Small entrepreneurs in Kolkata, too, have been drastically hit by the violence.

West Bengal enjoys a close relationship with Bangladesh due to its geographical location, and similar linguistics and culinary habits. Some areas in Kolkata are known as "mini Bangladesh" for their Bangladeshi influence and for the number of Bangladeshi tourists.

Many eateries, hotels and tour and travel entrepreneurs have been named after streets in Bangladesh. These businesses, located in areas like Marquis Street and Free School Street, are fully dependent on these tourists for their business which is badly hit now. Kingshuk Saha, 39, who runs an eatery offering Bangladeshi cuisine told Al Jazeera that he has almost lost 80 percent of his business as tourists have stopped coming. "The majority of our customers are Bangladeshi tourists who come for a holiday trip or for business work and stay in these areas," he said.

The Indian visa centres in Bangladesh remain shut until further notice due to the prevailing tension.

Shah Alam, 46, who runs a spare car parts shop in Dhaka and is currently on a trip to Kolkata, told Al Jazeera that his staff has not been able to open his shop for the past four to five days, but he is hopeful things will soon improve. I have been importing automobile spare parts from India for the past 10 years and have never faced any issues. The situation will improve soon in the coming days."

. — *Courtesy,* Al Jazeera

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

Will Paris remain disabled friendly after Olympics?

Since the start of the Olympics, Ndieme Lame has been commuting every day to the Stade de France where she works as a volunteer helping visitors find their way.

The 57-year-old wheelchair user is in awe at how easy it's been to cross the city on public transit to reach the Olympic stadium.

"I never would have believed I could make it here almost on my own," she said Wednesday after her 1 & 1/2-hour commute from her home in southern Paris. Her daily journey highlights the city's efforts to improve accessibility for specially-abled people ahead of the Olympics and Paralympics. Lame said an online system that lets her book assistance at commuter train stations has been particularly helpful.

Challenges remain, however, particularly in the underground Metro system where most stations are not fully accessible to people in wheelchairs.

And, Lame wonders whether the train station assistants will still be there after the Paralympics, which start just over two weeks after the Olympics end. On Wednesday, AP journalists accompanied Lame on her commute from her home in Porte de Versailles, in southwestern Paris, to the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, in the northern suburbs of the French capital. Wearing the teal-coloured attire of the Paris 2024 volunteers, Lame, diagnosed with polio when she was 11 months old, glided out the automatic door and took the elevator down to the street.

From there, a short ride on the sidewalk in her motorized wheelchair took her to the nearest tram station, which she accessed on a smooth concrete ramp.

"So far, so good," she said as she joined the commuters on the crowded T3 line, which runs alongside the Périphérique, the highway ring separating Paris from its outskirts. Other passengers made room for her wheelchair in the centre of the tram car.

At Cité-Universitaire train station, Lame transferred to an RER commuter train. A station assistant helped her access an elevator, which brought her to the platform. Another placed a ramp on the platform, which allowed her to enter the train.

The process, while straightforward, is not always reliable, Lame said.

On Wednesday, 53 of the 162 lifts in all train and Metro stations in the Paris region were under maintenance, according to IDF Mobilité, the regional body overseeing public transit.

After exiting the train at the Plaine Saint-Denis station, Lame made her way to the Stade de France in her wheelchair. "I was afraid of running late the entire time," she said.

At the Stade de France, one of the biggest obstacles for people using wheelchairs is accessing the stadium on the Passerelle de l'Ecluse, a pedestrian bridge with stairs leading up to it but no elevator.

Hugues Valet, a 26-year-old aspiring para-triathlete who lost the use of his legs after a car accident, was surprised to find an assistant on hand to help him up the stairs as he and his cousin arrived at the stadium to watch the track competition. "When I saw those stairs from afar, I was pretty upset and told my little cousin that we will have to turn around and make a huge detour to find another entry point," Valet said. "I'm pretty stunned at how we're being taken care of."

Andrew Parsons, president of the International Paralympic Committee, praised the city's efforts to make overground transport more accessible but noted the frustration that many feel regarding other parts of the public transit system, particularly the century-old Metro system in which 93% of stations remain inaccessible or only partially accessible to people in wheelchairs. "I understand the degree of frustration, but I'd like to see the glass half full and think about where we were, where we are and where we are going to be."

When the Paralympics begin on 28 August, the spotlight on Paris will not only be on the athletes but also on the city itself — its triumphs in accessibility, and the gaps that still need bridging.

Paris has made significant investments to improve accessibility since winning the bid to host the Summer Games in 2017.

The city boasts that 100% of its bus routes and tram lines are now wheelchair accessible, and 125 million euros have been allocated to further these efforts.

The city hall has also invested in the creation of 17 "enhanced accessibility districts" in which public facilities and shops are adapted with ramps, tactile strips and designated parking spots for people with disabilities.

"The idea was to radically transform the city," Lamia El Aaraje, deputy mayor of Paris in charge of accessibility, said on Thursday. "And, I think we are delivering on our promise."

—AP

57-year-old wheelchair user Ndieme Lame navigates Paris metro with assistance to reach Olympic Stadium

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

25 years of President Vladimir Putin at Russia's helm

Experts feel Russians see no alternative to Vladimir Putin and are afraid of change

PHOTO: ANI

When Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel ended her political career three years ago, I was supposed to interview her counterpart, Russia's President Vladimir Putin, in Moscow, for a documentary. Other heads of state and government who had worked with Merkel during her time in office were also to feature in the program, a retrospective of the German leader and her career.

But the Kremlin said no. The reason it gave was that all the other interview partners were former leaders, whereas the Russian president was still in office. The project was therefore deemed unworthy of him. I was, at least, allowed to interview Dmitry Medvedev, the former Russian president who served a single term from 2008 to 2012, as a sort of interim head of State. Putin couldn't run for president again in 2008 for constitutional reasons; instead, he became prime minister, and continued to pull the strings of government in the background.

Medvedev was never actually Russia's number one. For the past twenty-five years, that has always been Vladimir Putin, ever since he was appointed Russian Prime Minister by then-president Boris Yeltsin on 9 August, 1999. Western politicians, including Germany's long-term chancellor Merkel, come and go, but Putin remains. In the course of these twenty-five years, the Russian president has transformed his country into the "strongest personalized dictatorship in the world," says the Russian political scientist Mikhail Komin. He told DW that this was only possible because, over the quarter-century he has been in power, Putin has persistently undermined all of Russia's political institutions.

Regional control as the foundation of power

It all began with the abolition of regional autonomy, Komin explains. The Kremlin created its own instrument of control in the Russian regions, laying the foundation for a consolidation of power.

Another Russian political scientist, Grigory Nishnikov, based in Finland, shares this view. "If we think back to the Russia of the early Putin years, we can point to several autonomous centers of power, both constitutional and informal, such as the oligarchs," he told DW. "They all formed a sort of counterweight to the Kremlin." As Nishnikov explains, Putin destroyed all this, centralized everything, and focused Russia's system of power on himself. However, he believes that this is not the only reason why the Russian president has remained in power for so long. There have been plenty of events over the past twenty-five years that could have been dangerous for Putin, like the protests in Moscow's Bolotnaya Square following the 2011 parliamentary election; the risk of instability in Crimea after the Ukrainian peninsula was annexed in 2014; the unrest that followed the controversial pension reform in 2018; massive protests in support of the late Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny across Russia over the next few years; the start of the war in Ukraine, accompanied by protests on the streets of Moscow and St Petersburg. However, every act of popular resistance was followed by even greater repression: "And new adversaries were always eliminated in the course of these events," Nishnikov says. As a result, he does not believe there is anyone left now who could challenge Putin.

Weakening of the judiciary is another key factor

Mikhail Komin notes that another important factor that has enabled Putin to cling to power was the deliberate weakening of the courts that occurred during his second term.

Chief justices loyal to the authorities were given greater powers over their subordinate colleagues.

As a result, Komin says, the Russian courts are no longer independent.

They can at best slow down the processes of State repression directed against citizens, but they can no longer put a stop to it.

This has been compounded by changes to the electoral system in favour of Vladimir Putin and his ruling party, United Russia.

Putin's 'shadow cabinet'

Instead of asserting himself against a democratic opposition, Putin has surrounded himself with a kind of shadow cabinet, according to the Russian sociologist Alexander Bibkov.

The President has gathered into this inner circle people with whom he shares specific business interests, the sociologist explains.

Their companies have been awarded large state contracts, which have made them huge amounts of money:

"Putin always holds the reins, and is personally involved in the business," says Bibkov.

At the same time, society is being sold an image of Russia in which the country has only ever played a positive role, throughout its entire history.

All negative aspects are erased, all past conflicts obliterated, Bibkov says. He describes this as the "manipulation of the collective historical memory." And this, too, reinforces Putin's power.

This narrative portrays Russia as a society with traditional values; one that disapproves of conflict with the authorities, whereas unconditional loyalty to those in power is both applauded and taken for granted.

All three experts interviewed by DW agree that these tendencies will intensify in the future, and that Putin will remain in power for a long time to come.

"The problem is that there's no alternative candidate, and no room for one," says Mikhail Komin.

"The last election Putin really won was in 2004. Everything since then has been unfair."

Grigory Nishnikov also comments that Russians see no alternative to Putin, and that they tend to be afraid of change. He observes that there has always been a tendency in Russia to favor a "strong hand" in government. *—DW News*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Imran Khan, wife's remand extended by 11 days

ISLAMABAD, 9 AUG

An accountability court has extended by 11 days the physical remand of jailed former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in the new Toshakhana corruption case, media reports said on Friday. The hearing, presided over by Accountability Court Judge Nasir Javed Rana, took place on Thursday in the makeshift courtroom set up at Rawalpindi's high-security Adiala Jail, The Express Tribune newspaper reported. Judge Rana approved the remand extension of the former first couple for 11 days after the lapse of their 10-day physical remand in the fresh Toshakhana corruption case. Khan, 71, has been imprisoned at the Adiala Jail for more than a year now upon his conviction in multiple cases. —*PTI*

7 Pakistan security personnel killed in militant attack

PESHAWAR, 9 AUG

At least seven Pakistani security personnel were killed and 11 others injured when militants affiliated with the Pakistani Taliban attacked a security post in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Friday, officials here said. The attack took place in Tirah Valley, a town located on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, they said. Hafiz Gul Bahadar Group, which formed an alliance with the Tariq Afridi Group known as Tariq Gedar Group -- an affiliate of the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) -- in February, claimed responsibility for the attack in a social media post. According to the officials, the militants, in a bid to overtake the Aurakzai Scouts Check post, attacked it and later set it on fire. Explosives were used by the militants in the attack. —*PTI*

Travis Scott held after altercation with security guard

PARIS, 9 AUG

Rapper Travis Scott was arrested at a Paris hotel after an altercation with a security guard, French prosecutors said Friday. The arrest occurred after police were called to the Georges V hotel early Friday to arrest a man "nicknamed Travis Scott for violence against a security guard," according to a statement from the Paris public prosecutor's office. The hotel security guard had intervened in an altercation between the rapper and his own bodyguard. Police are still investigating. He was in Paris for the Olympics. He watched the US rally over Serbia in the men's basketball semifinal on Thursday night. Scott has more than 100 songs that made the Billboard Hot 100 and released four singles that topped the chart: "Sicko Mode," "Highest in the Room," "The Scotts," and "Franchise." —*AP*

9 killed as bus crashes into pillar in Turkey

ANKARA, 9 AUG

A bus travelling between cities in Turkey swerved off a highway and slammed into an overpass pillar Friday, killing nine people on board, an official said. At least 26 other people were injured. The crash occurred near the town of Polatli, some 80km from the capital Ankara, Gov Vasip Sahin told HaberTurk television station. The bus was traveling from the city of Izmir in western Turkiye to the city of Agri, in the east of the country. The cause of the crash, which led to the closure of one side of the highway, was not immediately known. There was no information on the conditions of the injured passengers who were rushed to hospitals in Polatli and Ankara. —*PTI*

Bdesh's interim govt announces new portfolios

New interim leader Muhammed Yunus to oversee 27 ministries

DHAKA, 9 AUG

Bangladesh's interim leader Muhammad Yunus on Friday announced the portfolios of the newly-appointed council of advisors and took charge of 27 ministries, including defence, and named career diplomat Mohammad Touhid Hossain to head the foreign ministry.

Nobel laureate Yunus, 84, on Thursday took oath as the head of an interim government, replacing Sheikh Hasina who abruptly resigned and fled to India leaving the country in turmoil following deadly protests against her government over a controversial quota system in jobs.

Former foreign secretary Hossain has been entrusted with the charge of the foreign ministry while retired Army brigadier general M Sakhawat Hossain was tasked to oversee the home ministry.

Members of the interim Cabinet, take oath of office in Dhaka, Bangladesh PHOTO: PTI

Hossain was the Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Kolkata from 2001 to 2005 and served as Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh from 2006 to 2009.

Former Bangladesh Bank governor Salahuddin Ahmed will be in charge of the finance and planning ministries while former attorney general A F Hassan Arif will oversee the local government ministry.

Two coordinators of Students Against Discrimination inducted in the interim cabinet M Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud were given the charge of telecommunications and information technology and youth and sports ministries respectively.

The group waged first the street movement to reform the quota system for government jobs last month which later turned into a public upsurge and ousted Hasina's 15-year regime.

Three members of the advisers' council, mostly civil society figures, could not take the oath on Thursday night at the Bangabhaban presidential palace as they were outside of the capital and officials presumed that Yunus might distribute some of the 27 portfolios to them. —*PTI*

SOME UPRISINGS THAT BROUGHT DOWN GOVERNMENTS

- **Gota Go Gama Protests:** Amid a severe economic crisis, widespread protests led by youth demanded the resignation of the Sri Lankan government in 2022. Despite initial resistance, including violent clashes, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa resigned, though President.
- **Athens Polytechnic Uprising:** Students at Athens Polytechnic in Greece led a revolt against the military junta, which ultimately contributed to the fall of the dictatorship and the return to democracy in 1974.
- **Kent State Demonstrations:** Protests against the Vietnam War escalated after the US expanded the conflict to Cambodia in 1970. The killing of four students by the National Guard at Kent State University became a pivotal moment in the anti-war movement.
- **Soweto Uprising:** Black students in Soweto in South Africa in 1976 protested against being forced to learn in Afrikaans, sparking widespread anti-apartheid protests. The brutal government crackdown resulted in hundreds of deaths, and the uprising became a symbol of the struggle against apartheid.
- **Velvet Revolution:** The non-violent protests against Communist rule in Czechoslovakia in 1989 led to the resignation of the Communist Party leadership and the establishment of a democratic government.

ISRAEL-GAZA WAR

US, Egypt and Qatar push for ceasefire talks

Palestinians react to fire from an Israeli strike that hit a tent area in the courtyard of Al Aqsa Martyrs hospital in Gaza Strip PHOTO: PTI

WASHINGTON DC, 9 AUG

The United States, Egypt and Qatar have released a joint statement calling on Israel and Hamas to resume negotiations over a ceasefire and hostage-release deal.

The statement said the three nations had forged a "framework agreement" that had "only the details of implementation left to conclude".

Israel said it would send negotiators to the proposed talks, which are pencilled in for 15 August in Doha or Cairo. Hamas did not immediately respond.

The renewed diplomatic push will be seen as an attempt to stop regional tensions from spiralling out of control, after Hamas' leader Ismail Haniyeh was assassinated last week. Iran, blaming Israel, has vowed a response - though Israel has not commented directly on the killing. The three nations invited Israel and Hamas to restart talks on 15 August "to close all remaining gaps and commence implementation of the deal without further delay." The statement was signed by US President Joe Biden, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, and the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. —*AP*

ISRAELI TROOPS LAUNCH NEW ASSAULT IN GAZA

DEIR AL-BALAH, 9 AUG

Israeli troops launched a new assault Friday into the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, targeting Hamas fighters who the military claims still operate there despite repeated offensives, as American, Qatari and Egyptian mediators renewed their push for Israel and Hamas to reach a cease-fire deal.

Israeli evacuation orders triggered yet another exodus of Palestinians from the heavily destroyed eastern districts of Khan Younis, where many had just returned less than two weeks ago — after the Israeli military's last incursion into the city in July.

Officials from Israel and the United States have said they believe Yahya Sinwar, Hamas' newly named top leader and one of the architects of the 7 October attack on Israel, could be hiding in tunnels under Khan Younis. —*AP*

Russia declares emergency after attack by Ukraine

MOSCOW, 9 AUG

Russia declared the situation in the Kursk region a "federal level" emergency and sent reinforcements there on Friday, four days after hundreds of Ukrainian troops poured over the border in what appeared to be Kyiv's biggest attack on Russian soil since the war began.

Meanwhile, a Russian plane-launched missile slammed into a Ukrainian shopping mall in the middle of the day, killing at least 10 people and wounding 35 others, authorities said.

The mall in Kostiantynivka, in the eastern Donetsk region, is located in the town's residential area. Russia's Defence Ministry said that reinforcements were on their way to the Kursk region to counter Ukraine's daring cross-border incursion. Russia is deploying multiple rocket launchers, towed artillery guns, tanks transported on trailers and heavy tracked vehicles, the RIA-Novosti new agency said, citing the Defence Ministry. —*AP*

Russia's Defence Ministry said that reinforcements were on their way to the Kursk region to counter Ukraine's incursion PHOTO: X/@ KARLSARKANS

BODYCAM SHOWS MOMENTS BEFORE TRUMP RALLY

WASHINGTON DC, 9 AUG

Newly released footage from local Pennsylvania police reveals a clearer picture of the moments surrounding the attempted assassination of Donald Trump in July.

In one body-camera video, a local officer tells colleagues he told the US Secret Service ahead of time to secure the building the gunman used.

Another shows the moment an officer is hoisted on to a rooftop and lays eyes on the gunman, seconds before he opens fire at the Trump rally.

Trump was nicked by a bullet in the shooting, one person was killed and two others badly injured.The open-air rally took place on Saturday 13 July. —*BBC News*

Syria says four troops wounded in Israeli strike

DAMASCUS, 9 AUG

Syrian state media reported Thursday that four soldiers were wounded by an Israeli strike in central Syria, citing a military statement.

The statement said the strike also caused "material losses," without further elaborating.

Earlier Syrian reports claimed that explosions were heard at the Shayrat Airbase in Homs. Israel has not commented on the alleged strike, which came nearly a week after a reported Israeli attack on a Hezbollah convoy crossing into Lebanon near the Syrian border village of Hawsh al-Sayyid Ali, which is around 20 miles southwest of Homs. Israel has been carrying out airstrikes inside Syria since the outbreak of that country's civil war in 2011, mainly targeting attempts to transfer weapons to the Iran-backed Hezbollah or to keep Iranian fighters themselves from gaining a foothold near Israel's border. —*Agencies*

One more held over foiled plot at Taylor Swift shows

VIENNA, 9 AUG

A third teenager has been arrested in connection with a foiled attack on now-cancelled Taylor Swift concerts in Vienna.

That's according to Austrian Interior Minister Gerhard Karner. The 18-year-old was taken into custody after allegedly being in contact with the main suspect. Karner announced the arrest during an unrelated news conference Friday.

Authorities say the plot appeared to be inspired by the Islamic State group and al-Qaida. Investigators found bomb-making materials at one of the suspects' homes. Officials say a suspect has confessed to planning to "kill as many people as possible outside the concert venue."

Three sold-out concerts were cancelled Wednesday because of the plot, devastating Swifties from across the globe.

Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer defended the decision to cancel the concerts, saying the arrests of the suspects took place too close to the shows, scheduled for Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Swift is also scheduled to perform at London's Wembley stadium in five concerts between 15 and 20 August to close the European leg of her record-setting Eras Tour.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan said that while he understood Vienna's reasons for cancelling, "We're going to carry on.

The CIA declined to say Thursday whether US intelligence agencies played any role in the investigation. —*AP*

AFTER A 2-WEEK PAUSE

Three suspected Houthi attacks target a ship off Yemen, says US

DUBAI, 9 AUG

Three suspected attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels targeted a ship in the strategic Bab el-Mandeb Strait linking the Gulf of Aden to the Red Sea, including one that saw private security guards shoot and destroy a bomb-loaded drone boat, authorities said Friday.

The Houthis did not immediately claim the assaults, though they follow a monthslong campaign by the rebels targeting shipping through the Red Sea corridor over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

After a recent two-week pause, their attacks resumed following the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran PHOTO: PTI

After a recent two-week pause, their attacks resumed following the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran, amid concerns of a wider regional war. —*AP*

THAI PARTY REGROUPS AS PEOPLE'S PARTY

BANGKOK, 9 AUG

Just two days after being disbanded by court order, Thailand's main progressive political party regrouped Friday under a new name and vowed to continue its fight for reforms despite continuing opposition from the conservative establishment that blocked the party from taking power despite finishing first in last year's election.

Thailand's Constitutional Court on Wednesday unanimously ruled that the Move Forward Party violated the constitution by proposing to amend a law that criminalises insulting the royal family. —*AP*

Venezuela Prez suspends X after exchange with Musk

CARACAS, 9 AUG

President Nicolas Maduro said he has ordered a 10-day block on access to X in Venezuela, accusing the owner Elon Musk of using the social network to promote hatred after the country's disputed presidential election.

Associated Press journalists in Caracas found that by Thursday night posts had stopped loading on X on two private telephone services and state-owned Movilnet.

"Elon Musk is the owner of X and has violated all the rules of the social network itself," said Maduro in a speech following a march by pro-government groups. Maduro alleged Musk "has incited hatred."

Maduro also accused the social network of being used by his opponents to create political unrest.

Venezuela's president said he had signed a resolution "with the proposal made by CONATEL, the National Telecommunications Commission, which has decided to remove the social network X, formerly known as Twitter, from circulation in Venezuela for 10 days so that they can present their documents." Maduro did not provide more details about the process taken against X.

"X out for 10 days! Elon Musk out!" Maduro said. —*AP*

WITHOUT US AMBASSADOR

Nagasaki marks 79 yrs of atomic bombing

TOKYO, 9 AUG

Nagasaki marked the 79th anniversary of its atomic bombing at the end of World War II at a ceremony Friday eclipsed by the absence of the American ambassador and other Western envoys in response to the Japanese city's refusal to invite Israel.

Mayor Shiro Suzuki, in a speech at Nagasaki Peace Park, called for nuclear weapon states and those under their nuclear umbrellas, including Japan, to abolish the weapons.

"You must face up to the reality that the very existence of nuclear weapons poses an increasing threat to humankind, and you must make a brave shift toward the abolition of nuclear weapons," Suzuki said.

The atomic bomb dropped by the United States on Nagasaki on 9 August, 1945, killed 70,000 people, three days after the bombing of Hiroshima killed 140,000. Japan surrendered on 15 August, 1945, ending World War II and its nearly half-century of aggression across Asia.

Speaking at Friday's ceremony, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida reiterated his pledge to pursue a nuclear-free world. His critics, many of them atomic bomb survivors, or hibakusha, say it's a hollow promise as Japan relies on the US nuclear umbrella while building up its own military.

At 11.02 am, the moment the bomb exploded above the Japanese city, participants observed a moment of silence PHOTO: X/@MAYORSFORPEACE

At 11.02 am, the moment the plutonium bomb exploded above the southern Japanese city, participants observed a moment of silence as a peace bell tolled. —*AP*

Gold jumps ₹1,100; Silver bounces ₹1,400

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

Gold price rallied Rs 1,100 to Rs 72,450 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, taking cues from the global market and a rise in domestic demand. In the previous session, the precious metal had settled at Rs 71,350 per 10 grams. Silver prices also jumped Rs 1,400 to Rs 82,500 per kilogram on Friday against Rs 81,100 per kg in the previous trade, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity bounced by Rs 1,100 to Rs 72,100 per 10 grams from the previous close of Rs 71,000 per 10 grams. Globally, Comex gold is trading higher at USD 2,468.90 per ounce, up by USD 5.60 per ounce from the previous session. *—PTI*

Rupee rises 2 paise to close at 83.95 against US dollar

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day higher by 2 paise at 83.95 (provisional) against US dollar on Friday, supported by gains in the domestic markets. Forex traders said the rupee edged up slightly on gains in the domestic markets. However, a surge in crude oil prices capped sharp gains for the local unit. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.95 and touched an intraday low of 83.96 and a high of 83.88 against the dollar during the session. It finally settled at 83.95 (provisional) against the American currency, higher by 2 paise from its previous close. The local unit had slumped 37 paise to settle at an all-time low of 84.09 against the US dollar on Monday. On Thursday, the rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day lower by 2 paise. *—PTI*

HCLTech's arm to acquire Zeenea firm for 24 million euros

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

HCLTech's arm HCLSoftware plans to acquire 100 per cent stake in France-based software firm Zeenea SAS at a valuation of 24 million euros, in an effort to diversify its data and analytics business offerings. The all-cash deal is expected to be completed in September 2024, according to a regulatory filing by HCLTech. HCLSoftware Chief Product Officer Kalyan Kumar said the acquisition will enable the firm to offer a unified data intelligence solution that will power enterprises to discover, govern, connect, manage and better leverage data in their data engineering and GenAI journeys. Founded in 2017, Paris-headquartered Zeenea is a software company, providing an intelligent data discovery platform that supports metadata management applications. It reported a revenue of 2.6 million euros in CY2023. Shares of HCLTech were trading 2.56 per cent higher at Rs 1597.95 apiece on the BSE on Friday. *—PTI*

Rudra Infra to set up solar plant at ₹190 cr investment

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

Steel maker Rudra Global Infra Products on Friday said the company will invest around Rs 190 crore to set up a 30 megawatt captive solar project in Gujarat. The solar plant is scheduled to commence operations by January 2025, the company said in a statement. The clean power generated will be primarily utilized to meet the energy requirements of the company's existing billet and TMT bar manufacturing operations. This initiative is expected to increase the capacity utilization of the SMS (steel melting shop) division from the current 33 per cent to 50 per cent. With the project, the company aims to produce 1 lakh tonne of billets and 2.1 lakh tonne of TMT bars annually. *—PTI*

Sensex bounces back 819 pts on global stocks rally

NSE Nifty soars up 250.5 points to settle at 24,367.5

MUMBAI, 9 AUG

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded 1 per cent each on Friday following buying in blue-chips such as Reliance and Infosys amid a rally in global equity markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex bounced back 819.69 points or 1.04 per cent to settle at 79,705.91 with 28 of its constituents closing in green and two in red. The index opened higher amid gains in Asian markets and later surged 1,098.02 points or 1.39 per cent to hit a high of 79,984.24.

The NSE Nifty soared 250.50 points or 1.04 per cent to 24,367.50. During the day, it rallied 302.75 points or 1.25 per cent to 24,419.75.

Most of the Sensex firms settled in the positive territory. Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Motors, Tech Mahindra, JSW Steel, State Bank of India, HCL Technologies, Reliance Industries and Infosys were the biggest gainers.

Kotak Mahindra Bank and Maruti were the laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 1.21 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.79 per cent.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark slumped 1,276.04 points or 1.57 per cent, while the Nifty declined 350.2 points.

A total of 2,330 stocks advanced while 1,579 declined and 97 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.03 per cent to USD 79.18 a barrel.

The BSE benchmark declined 581.79 points or 0.73 per cent to settle at 78,886.22 in a volatile trade on Thursday. The NSE Nifty retreated to settle lower by 180.50 points or 0.74 per cent to 24,117. *—PTI*

Kotak Mahindra Bank and Maruti were the only 2 laggards **PHOTO: PTI**

The stock made its debut at Rs 75.99, marginally down by 0.01 per cent from the issue price on the BSE **PHOTO: PTI**

Ola Electric shares jump 20% after flat market debut

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

Shares of Bhavish Aggarwal-led electric two-wheeler company Ola Electric Mobility Ltd surged 20 per cent to hit the upper circuit limit against the issue price of Rs 76 after listing on a flat note earlier in the day on Friday.

The stock made its debut at Rs 75.99, marginally down by 0.01 per cent from the issue price on the BSE. The stock made a smart comeback and jumped 19.97 per cent to Rs 91.18 -- the upper circuit limit.

At the NSE, shares of the firm listed at par with the issue price of Rs 76. Later, the stock soared 20 per cent to Rs 91.20 -- its upper circuit limit, in a remarkable comeback.

The company's market valuation stood at Rs 40,217.95 crore.

The Rs 6,145-crore initial public offer of Ola Electric Mobility received 4.27 times subscription on the final day of bidding on Tuesday.

The initial share sale had a price band at Rs 72-76 a share.

The Initial Public Offering (IPO), the first by an electric vehicle maker, had a fresh issue of up to Rs 5,500 crore and an Offer-for-Sale (OFS) of up to 8,49,41,997 equity shares.

According to its prospectus, Ola Electric Mobility Ltd (OEML) plans to utilise Rs 1,227.6 crore out of the proceeds of its Rs 5,500-crore public issue on capacity expansion of its cell manufacturing plant to 6.4 GWh from 5 GWh. *—PTI*

LIC shares climb 3%

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

Shares of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) climbed 3 per cent on Friday after the company reported a 10 per cent rise in net profit to Rs 10,461 crore in the June 2024 quarter. The stock jumped 3 per cent to Rs 1,159.60 on the BSE. At the NSE, it climbed 3 per cent to Rs 1,160 apiece.The state-owned life insurance behemoth had a net profit of Rs 9,544 crore in the year-ago period. The total income increased to Rs 2,10,910 crore during the latest June quarter as against Rs 1,88,749 crore in the year-ago period, LIC said. The total premium income for increased by 16 per cent to Rs 1,13,770 crore, as compared to Rs 98,363 crore in the same quarter a year ago. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

PHOTO: PTI

SEBI asks mutual fund industry to conduct stress test

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

Markets regulator SEBI has asked the mutual fund industry to proactively conduct stress tests, a key component of risk management for the financial sector, which will help strengthen the ecosystem, its whole-time member Ananth Narayan Gopalakrishnan said on Friday.

The regulator's stress testing emphasizes the need to assess and manage liquidity risks, especially in small and midcap equity schemes.

Speaking at a mutual fund event, Gopalakrishnan highlighted the importance of modelling stress scenarios not just for individual schemes or fund houses but for the entire mutual fund ecosystem.

Moreover, the number of mutual fund investors has grown significantly from about 2 crore as of March 2019 to nearly 4.7 crore as of June 2024, an impressive compounded annual growth rate of 18 per cent during that period. *—PTI*

Leather & footwear industry can create 1 cr jobs: Piyush

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

Union Minister of Commerce & Industry Piyush Goyal stated that the leather and footwear industry of the country has the potential to raise employment in the sector from the current 40 lakh to 1 crore.

The minister stated it while inaugurating the 8th India International Footwear Fair in Delhi on Thursday. He highlighted that the leather and footwear industry has the ability to expand its market domestically and abroad.

"We have the world market to capture. We need self-confidence, open mind to accept change" said Goyal.

The minister also added that the implementation of Quality Control Orders (QCOs) will help prevent substandard, low-cost leather product imports and help save the Indian Footwear industry from unfair competition. He stated QCOs will help inculcate a spirit of quality among the domestic manufacturers, enabling India to become a world-class manufacturer of quality footwear. Minister Goyal asserted that India is poised to become the market leader in the world. He also expressed hope for the footwear industry to become the world's largest manufacturer. Currently, India is the 2nd largest manufacturer and 9th largest exporter of footwear. *—ANI*

Piyush Goyal **PHOTO: PTI**

High food prices raise concerns for RBI: SBI

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

The ongoing volatility in the prices of key food items such as tomatoes, onions, and potatoes (collectively known as TOP) and pulses continues to pose significant challenges for the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), a report by SBI.

"Current volatility in prices of TOP and pulses continues to challenge the MPC, keeping the headline above target at 5.1 per cent in June.

The report highlighted that this instability in food prices has kept the headline Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation above the targeted level, reaching 5.1 per cent in June 2024. While the inflationary pressures remain a concern, the report stated that there is hope on the horizon due to the currently above-normal monsoon and increased sowing activity, which are further supported by the potential onset of a La Nina event later in the year.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said inflation will moderate from July onwards as the monsoon has improved and global food prices have shown signs of easing in July. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

SAYS GTRI

India's steel exports have dropped by 31.2% from $31.7 billion in 2021-22 to $21.8 billion in 2023-24 **PHOTO: PTI**

Germany's low-emission steel law threatens Indian industry

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

Germany's proposed Low Emission Steel Standard (LESS) is expected to pose new challenges to Indian industry which is already reeling with lower exports, higher imports and Europe's carbon tax, think tank GTRI said on Friday.

India's steel exports have dropped by 31.2 per cent from USD 31.7 billion in 2021-22 to USD 21.8 billion in 2023-24, while imports have increased by 37 per cent, from USD 17.3 billion to USD 23.7 billion, making India a net importer, it said.

The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that the Indian steel industry is not legally bound to follow the new German steel standard, but ignoring it could hurt domestic exports.

"Global markets are demanding low-carbon products, and Indian steel producers not aligning with LESS may struggle to compete," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

He added that India's steel industry must prepare to comply with new steel standards introduced by Germany, but may soon be adopted by other developed countries.

The GTRI suggested the industry invest in low-carbon technologies that reduce carbon emissions, such as electric arc furnaces, hydrogen-based steelmaking, and carbon capture and storage to deal with these issues.

The domestic players should also conduct comprehensive carbon footprint assessments to identify reduction opportunities is important step.

South Korea remains India's largest steel supplier, but imports from China and Vietnam have seen significant growth. *—PTI*

India set to become $8 trillion economy by 2034: Shaurya

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

India is set to become a USD 8 trillion economy by 2034 and will pivot much of the world in terms of its economics and geopolitics, according to BJP leader and founder of think-tank India Foundation Shaurya Doval.

In an interaction with PTI editors at the agency's headquarters here, he said the country is likely to face significant headwinds in the future as far as its ability to export is concerned.

Doval said that "as we head into the next 25 years, we are going to see India is going to pivot much of the world in terms of its economics.

What was achieved in the last 75 years, USD 4 trillion, will be achieved in the next 10 years alone, and "by 2034, we will be an 8 trillion dollar economy", he said. *—PTI*

Shaurya Doval **PHOTO: PTI**

EQUITY MUTUAL FUNDS' INFLOW DROPS 9% TO RS 37,113 CR

NEW DELHI, 9 AUG

Inflow in equity mutual funds declined 9 per cent month-on-month to Rs 37,113 crore in July owing to the drop in fund infusion in large-cap, small- and mid-cap categories.

Despite the dip, the quantum of net inflows witnessed in July was the second highest flows ever received in a month. Also, this was second only to the flows of Rs 40,608 crore received in June.

The latest flow also marks the 41st consecutive month of net inflows in equity funds, data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) showed on Friday

Moreover, monthly contributions from Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) rose to an all-time high of Rs 23,332 crore in July as against Rs 21,262 crore.

This reflects the growing financial discipline among retail investors, helping them build wealth systematically over time, Venkat Chalasani, Chief Executive, AMFI, said.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Overall, the mutual fund industry has witnessed an inflow of Rs 1.9 lakh crore in the month under review as compared to an outflow of Rs 43,637 crore in June. The inflow was due to investment in equity and debt schemes.

With these inflows, the industry's net assets under management rose to an all-time high of Rs 65 lakh crore in July-end from Rs 61.15 lakh crore in June-end.

The liquid fund category, which bore the brunt of the outflows in June with a significant net outflow of Rs 80,354 crore, saw the highest inflows. *—PTI*

DELIVERY IN 72 HOURS

Amazon India sets up 4 disaster hubs

MUMBAI, 9 AUG

E-commerce giant Amazon India on Friday said it has set up four hubs, including a temporary hub in West Bengal, to deliver urgent relief material in less than 72 hours, as part of its disaster management strategy.

Located at Thane (Maharashtra), Faridabad (Haryana), Hyderabad (Telangana) and Purba Bardhaman in West Bengal, these disaster relief mitigating facilities will enable the company to swiftly mobilize resources and support communities affected by natural disasters like floods, cyclones, cold waves, among others, Amazon India said.

The locations of these hubs -- West, North, South and East of India -- have been strategically identified keeping network optimization in mind and developed by a team of experts at Amazon transportation services, it said.

The move comes in response to floods in several parts of the country due to heavy rainfall this year, the company said.

As part of the ongoing relief efforts, Amazon has delivered 10,890 shelter kits to the affected communities supporting over 10,000 families across 34 districts.

According to the company, till 1 August, Amazon has committed 18,200 relief kits containing supplies of all types of food, non-food, shelter items, and have utilized 45 per cent of the pre-stocked supplies at the hubs for the year in response to, severed monsoon flooding across the Southwest and Northeast regions and the most recent landslides in Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. *—PTI*

Amazon has delivered 10,890 shelter kits to the affected communities supporting over 10,000 families across 34 districts **PHOTO: PTI**

Samsung recalls 1M electric ranges after fire reports

NEW YORK, 9 AUG

Samsung is recalling more than 1.12 million electric ranges used for stovetops after reports of 250 fires and dozens of injuries.

According to a Thursday notice from the US Consumer Product Safety Commission, these slide-in ranges have front-mounted knobs that can be activated by accident if humans or pets unintentionally contact or bump into them. That poses a fire hazard.

To date, Samsung has received more than 300 reports of the knobs activating unintentionally since 2013, the CPSC noted, and the now-recalled ranges have been involved in about 250 fires. At least 18 of those fires caused extensive property damage and seven involved pet deaths, according to the Commission.

In addition, the CPSC added, about 40 injuries have been reported, including eight that required medical attention.

Consumers can identify whether their slide-in electric range is included in this recall by looking at the model number printed on the product. Both Samsung and the CPSC have published a list of affected models online. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

GOLDEN BOY

SPARKLES WITH SILVER

Pak Gold medallist Arshad sets Olympic record

> We are very happy with the silver, the one who got gold is also our child and the one who got silver is also our child....all are athletes, all work hard
>
> -Saroj Devi, Neeraj Chopra's mother

NEERAJ: CELEBRATED CAREER

Silver in Olympics	2024
Gold in Asian Games	2023
Gold in World Championships	2023
Silver in Diamond League	2023
Silver in World Championships	2022
Gold in Diamond League	2022
Gold in Olympics	2020
Gold in Asian Games	2018
Gold in Commonwealth Games	2018
Gold in Asian Championship	2017
Gold in South Asian Games	2016

X= FOUL
M= IN METRES

6 ATTEMPTS BY NEERAJ

X | 89.45M | X | X | X

6 ATTEMPTS BY ARSHAD

X | 92.97M | 88.72M | 79.40M | 84.87M | 91.79M

ALL EYES ON WINNERS

PARIS, 9 AUG

Gold medallist Arshad Nadeem from Pakistan and Silver medallist Neeraj Chopra from India celebrate after the men's javelin throw final at the 2024 Summer Olympics, in Paris on Friday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Defending champion Neeraj Chopra became the first Indian track-and-field athlete to win two successive Olympic medals with a silver in men's javelin throw but the night belonged to Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, who destroyed competition by setting a new Olympic record for his country's maiden individual gold at the showpiece.

Nadeem managed an astonishing 92.97m in his second attempt to set the bar too high for the rest of the field, including Chopra, who seemed under pressure and managed just one legitimate throw -- the silver-winning 89.45m in the second round.

It was the season's best effort from the Indian, topping his qualification throw of 89.34m, but nowhere close to being enough for gold.

Chopra said he was largely thinking about his injury (adductor niggle) when he was going for his throws.

"Whenever I throw, 60-70 percent focus is on injury. My runway was not good today, my speed was also low. Whatever I have done, I have done with this issue. I didn't have time for surgery. I was just pushing myself," Chopra said later.

"There is a lot left in me. I have to do that. I have that feeling that I can do it. Unless I achieve that, I won't be at peace."

Nonetheless, Chopra became only the third Indian and the first in track and field to win back-to-back individual Olympic medals.

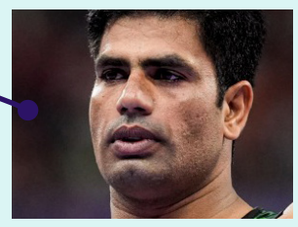
Only wrestler Sushil Kumar (2008 and 2012) and shuttler PV Sindhu (2016 and 2021) have won back-to-back Olympic medals.

"The rivalry is there when it comes to cricket matches and other sports, definitely. But at the same time, it is a good thing for youngsters in both countries who are pursuing a sport to follow us and follow their sports icons and bring laurels to their countries," the 27-year-old Nadeem told reporters after becoming the first Pakistani to clinch an individual Olympic gold medal.

Chief Minister of Pakistan's Punjab province, Maryam Nawaz, has announced a 10 crore (PKR) cash prize for javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem.

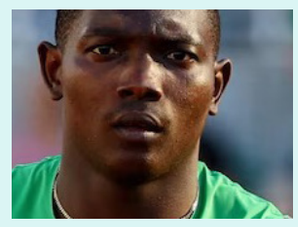
Nawaz also said a sports city named after the athlete would be built in his hometown of Khanewal. *—PTI*

TOP 3 IN JAVELIN THROW FINALS



ARSHAD NADEEM (PAKISTAN) — 92.97m (Olympics record)

NEERAJ CHOPRA (INDIA) — 89.45m (Season's best)



ANDERSON PETERS (Grenada) — 88.54m

Sreejesh to join Bhaker as India's flag-bearer

PARIS, 9 AUG

PR Sreejesh ***PHOTO: PTI***

Celebrated hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh will join star shooter Manu Bhaker as the flag-bearer of the Indian contingent in the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games on Sunday, a fitting honour and recognition for his contributions to the team.

Before homing in on Sreejesh, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) chief PT Usha spoke with Neeraj Chopra, and she said even the superstar javelin thrower wanted to see the retiring legend as flag-bearer.

"I spoke with Neeraj Chopra and appreciate the spontaneity and grace with which he agreed that Sreejesh should be the flag-bearer at the Closing Ceremony," Usha said.

"He told me 'Ma'am, even if you had not asked me, I would have suggested Sree bhai's name," she revealed.

The legendary Sreejesh retired from the game after India's bronze medal-winning feat at the ongoing Games, bringing to an end a glorious career spanning 18 years.

Meanwhile, Sreejesh will soon be seen in a new role following his retirement from the sport, with Hockey India set to announce him as the coach of the junior national team. *—PTI*

COUNTRIES				
1. China	32	25	20	77
2. US	30	38	36	104
3. Aus	18	15	14	47
4. France	14	19	22	55
65. India	0	1	4	5

Indian men & women's relay teams fail to qualify

PARIS, 9 AUG

The Indian men's 4x400m relay team failed to live up to expectations as it finished 10th overall in the heat race to miss a final round spot in the Paris Olympics here on Friday.

The Indian quartet of Muhammed Anas Yahiya, Muhammed Ajmal, Amoj Jacob and Rajesh Ramesh clocked a season's best of 3 minutes and 0.58 seconds but that was enough only for a seventh-place finish in heat number 2 and 10th overall out of 16 teams.

The top three teams in each of the two heats and the next two fastest across the two heats advance to the final.

Botswana (2:57.76), Great Britain (2:58.88) and USA (2:59.15) were the top three while Japan was fourth with a time of 2:59.48.

India holds the Asian record of 2:59.05 which it had clocked during the 2023 Budapest World Championships where the team was briefly running along side the formidable USA.

The Athletics Federation of India had pinned a lot of hope on the men's 4x400m relay team to make it to the final round, but it failed to do so ultimately. The women's 4x400m relay team also failed to qualify for the final round after finishing 15th overall out of 16 countries competed in the round one heats.

Meanwhile, Indian wrestler Antim Panghal, who found herself in a soup following a disciplinary breach at the Olympic Games' athlete's village in Paris, returned to country on Friday.

The wrestler grabbed headlines on Wednesday after she tried to facilitate her sister's entry into the athletes village through her accreditation card, after which they were summoned by police. *—PTI*

India's Jyothika Dandi take the baton from Vithya Ramraj during the women's 4 x 400m relay race at the 2024 Summer Olympics, in Paris, on Friday ***PHOTO: PTI***

India's Rajesh Ramesh competes in the men's 4 x 400m relay event at the 2024 Summer Olympics, in Paris, on Friday ***PHOTO: PTI***

GOLDEN ERA

Why are Spain's teams dominating football?

MADRID, 9 AUG

The men's national team beat England to be crowned European champions this summer while the women's team won the World Cup last year.

They also hold the two biggest titles in European club football, with Real Madrid and Barcelona winning last season's men's and women's Champions League respectively.

They could soon add an Olympic gold medal to their list of achievements too, with Spain into the men's final in Paris on Friday. The women's team just missed out, being beaten by Brazil in the semi-finals.

It is a hugely impressive list of achievements - and perhaps worrying for rival countries given the success has come despite a chaotic backdrop as a result of the sexism scandal that overshadowed the women's World Cup win.

Familiarity and continuity appear to have also played a significant role in Spain's recent dominance.

When the men's team last enjoyed a period of dominance - in the late 2000s and early 2010s - they were renowned for their short passing and 'tiki taka' style of football.

For all the good that has happened with Spanish football in recent years it is still trying to repair its reputation following the sexism scandal that overshadowed the country's Women's World Cup win last year. *—BBC News*

The men's national team beat England to be crowned European champions this summer while the women's team won the World Cup last year ***PHOTOS: BBC***

Former FIFA interim president Issa Hayatou dies at 77

PARIS, 9 AUG

Issa Hayatou, the long-time leader of African soccer who was made interim president of FIFA during its corruption crisis in 2015, died on Thursday. He was 77. FIFA president Gianni Infantino said in an Instagram post: "Saddened to hear of the passing of former CAF president, former FIFA president and interim, FIFA vice-president and FIFA Council member Issa Hayatou. On behalf of FIFA, condolences go to his family, friends, former colleagues and all who knew him. Rest in peace." Hayatou also was a member of the International Olympic Committee for 15 years, through 2016, and remained an honorary member. He died in Paris while the city hosted the Olympics. Though a national champion runner in track and field, it was in soccer that Hayatou rose to power and influence from his native Cameroon. ***—PTI***

PHOTO: PTI

India to play 2-day tour match in Australia

CANBERRA, 9 AUG

The visiting Indian cricket team will play a two-day day-night tour match against Australia's Prime Minister's XI between the first two Tests of the five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy later this year.

India and Australia meet in five-Test series starting in Perth on 22 November.

Indian team will play a two-day day-night tour match against the Prime Minister XI at the Manuka Oval in Canberra on 30 November and 1 December, Cricket Australia said on their website. *—PTI*

Ricky Ponting keen to coach in IPL again

DUBAI, 9 AUG

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Ricky Ponting remains keen on taking up coaching opportunities in the Indian Premier League following his exit from Delhi Capitals, revealing that the franchise is likely to replace him with an Indian coach.

Ponting, who left his role as Delhi Capitals' head coach last month after a seven-year stint, acknowledged that the lack of silverware led to his exit from the IPL side, but he wants to throw his hat in the ring again.

"I'd love to coach again in the IPL. I've had a great time every year that I've been involved, whether that was in the early days as a player or the couple of years I had at Mumbai as head coach there," he said on The ICC Review podcast.

"I've had seven seasons at Delhi, which unfortunately didn't really work out the way that I would have wanted and certainly the way that the franchise would have wanted."

Ponting said Delhi Capitals could be looking for someone who can give more time in the off season.

"What you'll find is that they'll probably end up with an Indian-based head coach. Certainly that's some of the dialogue that I've had with them anyway," he said.

"They made it pretty clear that they wanted to head in a different direction with someone that could give them a bit more time and a bit more availability through the off-season," he said. *—PTI*